Socrates + Harkness

= Krajeck

...a journey toward student independence with the Common Core Standards

2012
Socrates says…

"The unexamined life is not worth living."
The Socratic method of teaching is based on Socrates’s theory that it is more important to enable students to think for themselves than to merely fill their heads with "right" answers.
Therefore, he regularly engaged his pupils in dialogues by responding to their questions with questions, instead of answers.
This process encourages divergent thinking rather than convergent.
The Socratic method...

...gives students opportunities to "examine" a common piece of text, whether it is in the form of a novel, poem, art print, or piece of music.

http://www.studyguide.org/socratic_seminar.htm
After "reading" the common text "like a love letter," open-ended questions are posed.
The Common Core says...

1. [Students shall] Demonstrate Independence.

Students can, **without** significant scaffolding, comprehend and evaluate complex texts across a range of types and disciplines, ….
Likewise, students are able independently to discern a speaker’s key points, request clarification, and ask relevant questions.

(CCR 3-4)
... method was developed at Phillips Exeter Academy (New Hampshire) with funds donated in the thirties by Edward L. Harkness.

It involves students seated in a circle, preferably at round tables, motivating and controlling their own discussion.

The teacher acts as little as possible.
"Do not tell them how to do it. Show them how to do it and do not say a word. If you tell them, they will watch your lips move.

If you show them, they will want to do it themselves."
Krajeck says…

Don’t let students BRAIN-SUCK!
Remember Dr. Wong?

Students Should Leave the Classroom More Tired Than the Teacher…aka Wong’s Words!
Therefore, ...

- Teachers MUST train students to become the discussion “thinkers” without allowing students to BRAINSUCK from the teacher.

- Question: Just how long will this training take?
Note that this CCSS begins at Grade 6:

**Conduct discussions**: Students should engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, small group, teacher-led), building on others’ ideas and expressing their own based on evidence. Students ask and respond to specific questions as well as review key ideas expressed and demonstrate understanding through reflection and paraphrasing (SL.6.1).
Can a teacher expect to have a deep, analytical discussion led by students tomorrow, following this two-hour Socratic/Harkness/Krajeck intro?
Let’s be realistic, there is no way a teacher suddenly can introduce these methods to a class of 30 + students and expect immediate success!

(I have been practicing this method since the 80s and my first Great Books training, which is, I want to emphasize, a GREAT training if one can afford the program!)
Let’s Begin...

Since the Core advises “one-on-one” first…and the Core follows up with this:

- **Report findings**: Using appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation, students orally present claims in a logical, coherent manner to accentuate main ideas or themes.

- ...how do we get there?
Classroom Atmosphere

Do you greet students at the door every day? (...even though they make look down at the floor...or sneer or look angry to walk into your classroom?)

Solutions...
Do you walk to the door just before class ends and thank the students for participating?

(Teachers should be the last ones that students communicate with at the end of classes.)
Can EVERY student in class recognize EVERY student by at least his/her first name?

(If not…work on this NOW!)
Step Three

Although it is a hassle, move students around in the classroom each day...from rows to circles, make the circles different each week.

Try to develop “families” of students ...two, then three, etc.
Establish Speaking Guidelines

- Clear voice
- Respect for the speaker
- Recognition for the speaker as he/she finishes

( A warm and fuzzy story about encouraging those who are shy would be helpful here. A by-product of this is that it stops bullying.)
Require “Thank you…”

Remember that some students never speak to adults, and our students may not know how to act in one-to-one speaking situations… guide them!

Applause!
“Good job, thanks!”
“I’d like to pass at this time, thanks!”
Step Four

Teachers…remember NO BRAINSUCKING…if students can’t or won’t provide answers…go on to another activity, but REMIND the students that they are still responsible for the material.

(Thus…get away from needless paperwork such as study guides that fill-in-the-blank.)
Stop the Drooling Students

Yes, we actually TRAIN students to expect “points” or some other needless reward… and we assume that they will not do the work/task unless they receive something in return.

I truly believe we can and must train students to work for the sake of working…as a community and world responsibility!
Before students can “analyze” text, they need to know HOW to READ text…and to do something with it!

Use your own method of highlighting and annotating text, or use this method:
Students need practice interacting with text BEFORE meaningful discussion begins.

**Reminder:** Remember that Mortimer Adler believes there are THREE types of questions:

- What does it say? (factual)
- What does it mean? (interpretive)
- Is it true? (evaluative...does it have meaning for YOU?)
Let’s Begin!

Here’s a piece to SOAPSTone.

Using a pencil and highlighter, begin to R / H / A.

Reminder…I MAY or may NOT collect your SOAPSTone notes…so the question is…”To be [worthy of points] or NOT to be [worthy of points]!”
Assign a Time Limit!

Now, using your “family” {or members of your TEAM table}, combine your SOAPSTone notes/evidence. SOAPSTone is merely an acronym for an easier form of analysis, developed and recommended by College Board.

* The person wearing the MOST clothes is the Scribe...the person with the FEWEST clothes will be the Speak-Out!
“Time is of the Essence”

Learn to “read” the attention span of your class...usually two or three minutes is all that is necessary and sanely appropriate!

This is NOT the time to walk away or open up your laptop! Things could go down hill quickly!

* Best advice...walk around with a stopwatch (it doesn’t have to work...it’s the EFFECT!)
Speak-Out persons should share – out to a larger group.

…or if students are restless…STOP the process, COLLECT the SOAPS…and run a few off (both effective and NON-effective ones… and have a quiz tomorrow!

Those groups who produced non-effective work will realize that it is irritating to let
The process of learning a basic form of analysis…works only if the process becomes natural.

Do it again next week…using small text selections, either literary or informational.

Once students can SOAPSTone naturally, the class is ready to move on to Socratic/Harkness “concentric OR inner/outer circle discussion.
THE NEXT STEP IS...

...creating open-ended questions, particularly questions that students may partner to answer.

IF you haven’t checked out this teacher resource:

http://www.shmoop.com

DO IT! (However, please do NOT reveal to students!)
But, alas…

…that process is one for another session!

See you in the Spring, perhaps?
Now, it’s on to the seminar...

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Subject: Socratic Stuff

(I will will send you my Power Point!)

Or…if you have a flash …stay and I will transfer!