

Socratic Seminars for Elementary Emerging Bilingual Students CABE Spring 2020



**Lisa Hammond and Cecilia Lopez
University Hill Elementary School
Boulder, CO**

Jim Cummins Quote...

“The roots of the term *education* imply drawing out children’s potential, making them **more** than they were; however, when children come to school fluent in their primary language and they leave school essentially monolingual in English, then our schools have negated the meaning of the term *education* because they have made children **less** than they were.”

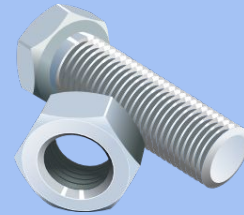
Jim Cummins, Empowering Minority Students, 1989

What to Expect from Today's Session

Part 1: Introductory Information



Part 2: Socratic Seminars: Nuts and Bolts



Part 3: Moving forward with Socratic Seminars



University Hill Elementary School Boulder, Colorado

We are a Title 1 Spanish/English Dual Language school serving students from preschool - 5th grade. As a language focus school, in addition to being classroom teachers, all teachers function as English Language Development and/or Spanish as a Second Language teachers during the instructional day.



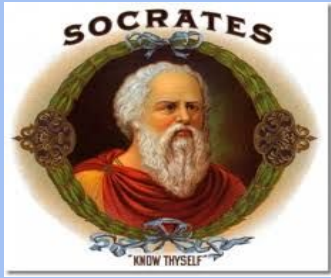
How did we become interested in Socratic Seminars?

Professional Development Course: John Zola's Socratic Seminar Class

We realized that Socratic Seminars matched some needs we saw in our EB students:

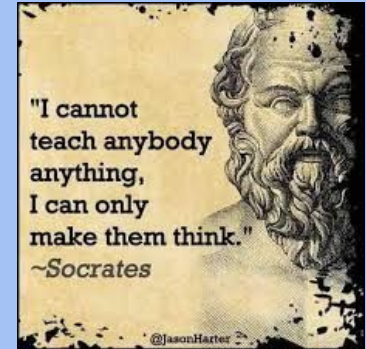
- Oral language development
- Critical Thinking / Depth of Thought
- Discussion Skills
- Empowerment of underrepresented populations.





So who was Socrates?

Socrates is known for developing a discussion style that involved questioning on the part of the teacher. In this way, the students themselves were responsible for creating meaning.



“Socratic seminars are classroom discussions that promote higher level thinking, more careful reading of texts, and increased classroom and civil discussion skills. They are appropriate for students at any age (K-12) and are most effective in literature, social studies, history, and other “humanities” courses.”

(John Zola, www.johnzola.com)

Quick Overview of Socratic Seminars



Socratic Seminars in a nutshell...

- All students given same text, photograph, quote etc. to examine closely.
- Teachers only ask questions and keep kids on task. (The teacher is NOT the leader typically are not part of the conversation; they act as facilitators/moderators).
- Students join in the conversation without raising their hands.
- There are NO right or wrong answers. The teacher does not have an agenda as to what the students are to learn from the discussion; goal is for **students to create their own meaning**.
- Everyone participates.*



How does a Socratic Seminar support the Common Core?

Close reading

Citing text evidence

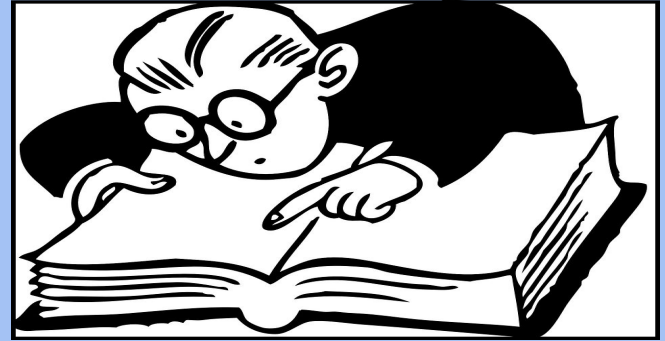
Participate effectively in discussions

Pose and respond to related discussion questions

Listening skills

Determine theme and central idea of a text

Gain understanding of other perspectives



and....

Socratic Seminars also support our district initiatives for literacy and language development by focusing on increased opportunities for oracy.



Socratic Seminars and WIDA Can Do Descriptors

A great way to cover lots of territory!

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1U4Rxhb7WRFuGIh-7bTrqh3o2evZz9_h34Bo5pqK-ylE/edit



Why Socratic Seminars can be challenging for elementary EBs

- Social skills
- Linguistic skills
- Cultural differences



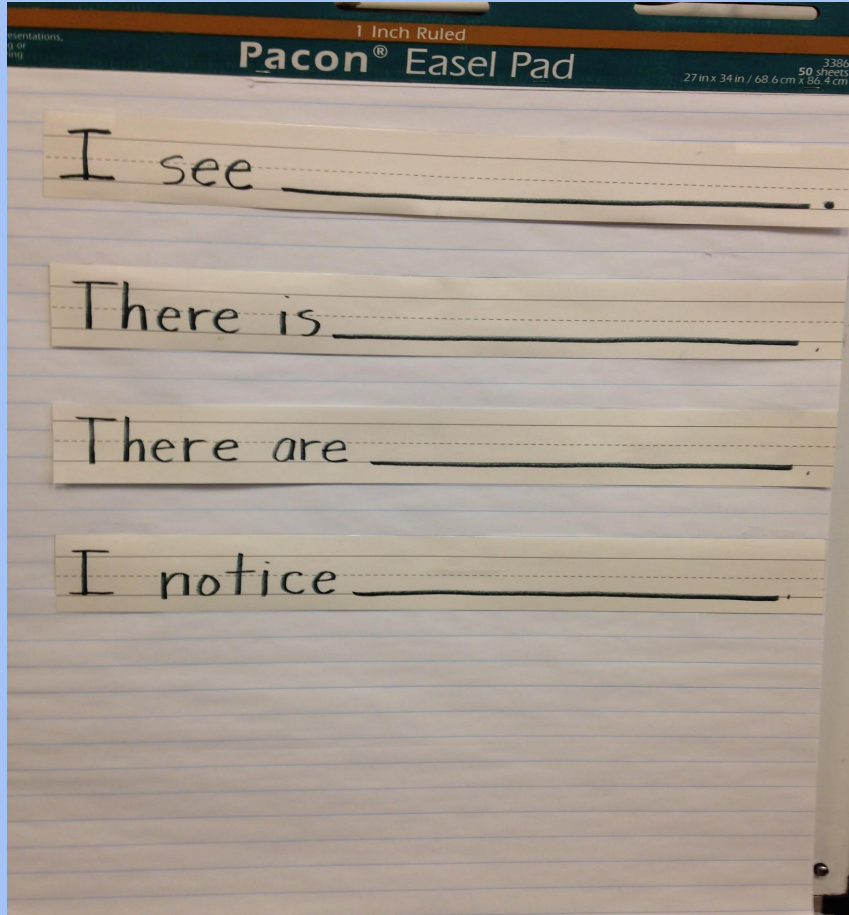
How might teachers scaffold a Socratic Seminar?



Before the seminar...

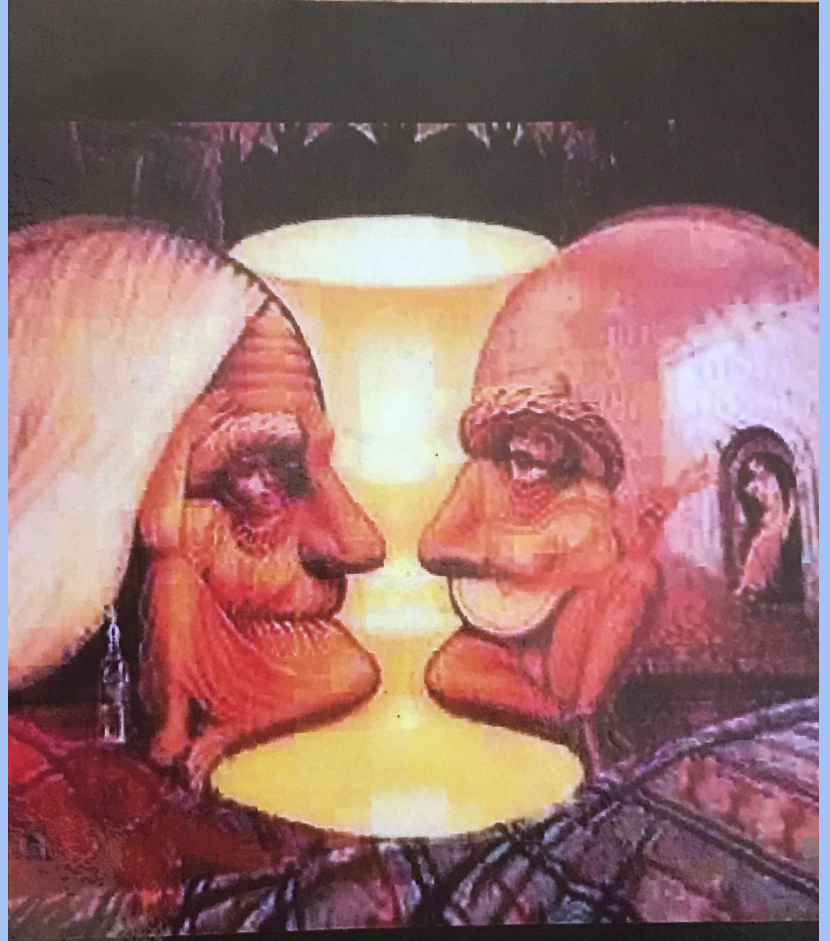
Explicit teaching of skills
through **mini-lessons**

Mini-lesson #1: Looking Closely



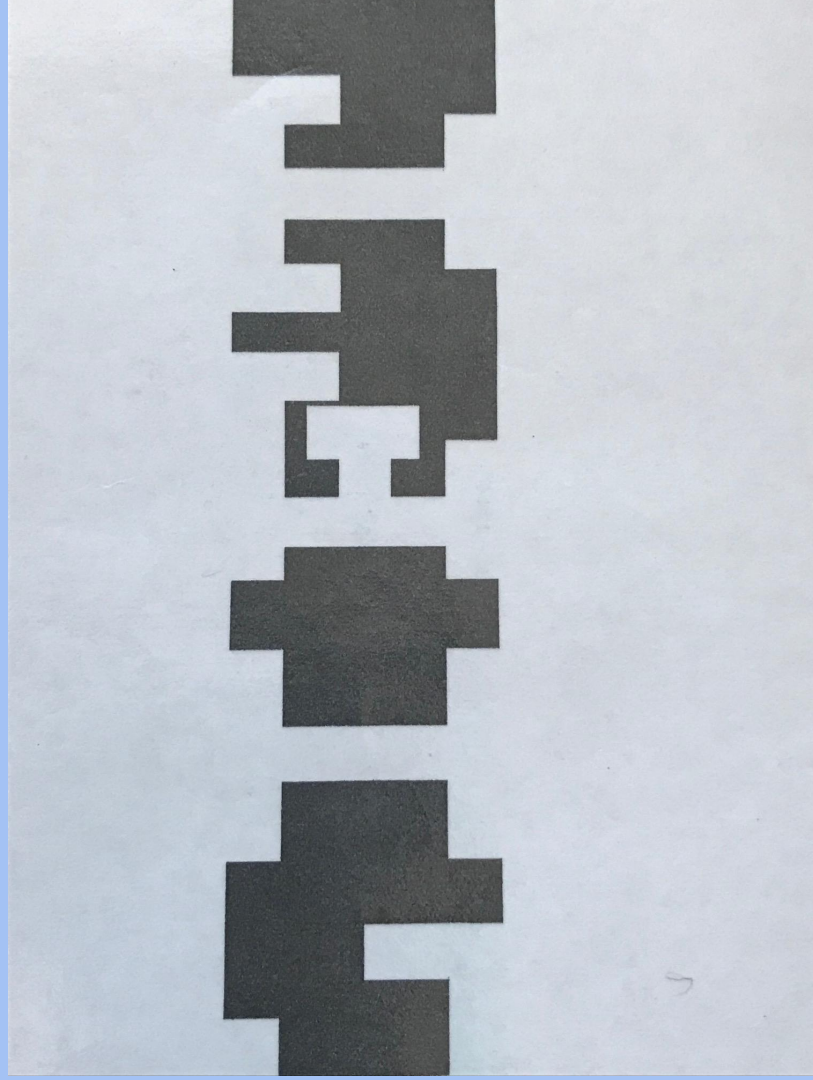


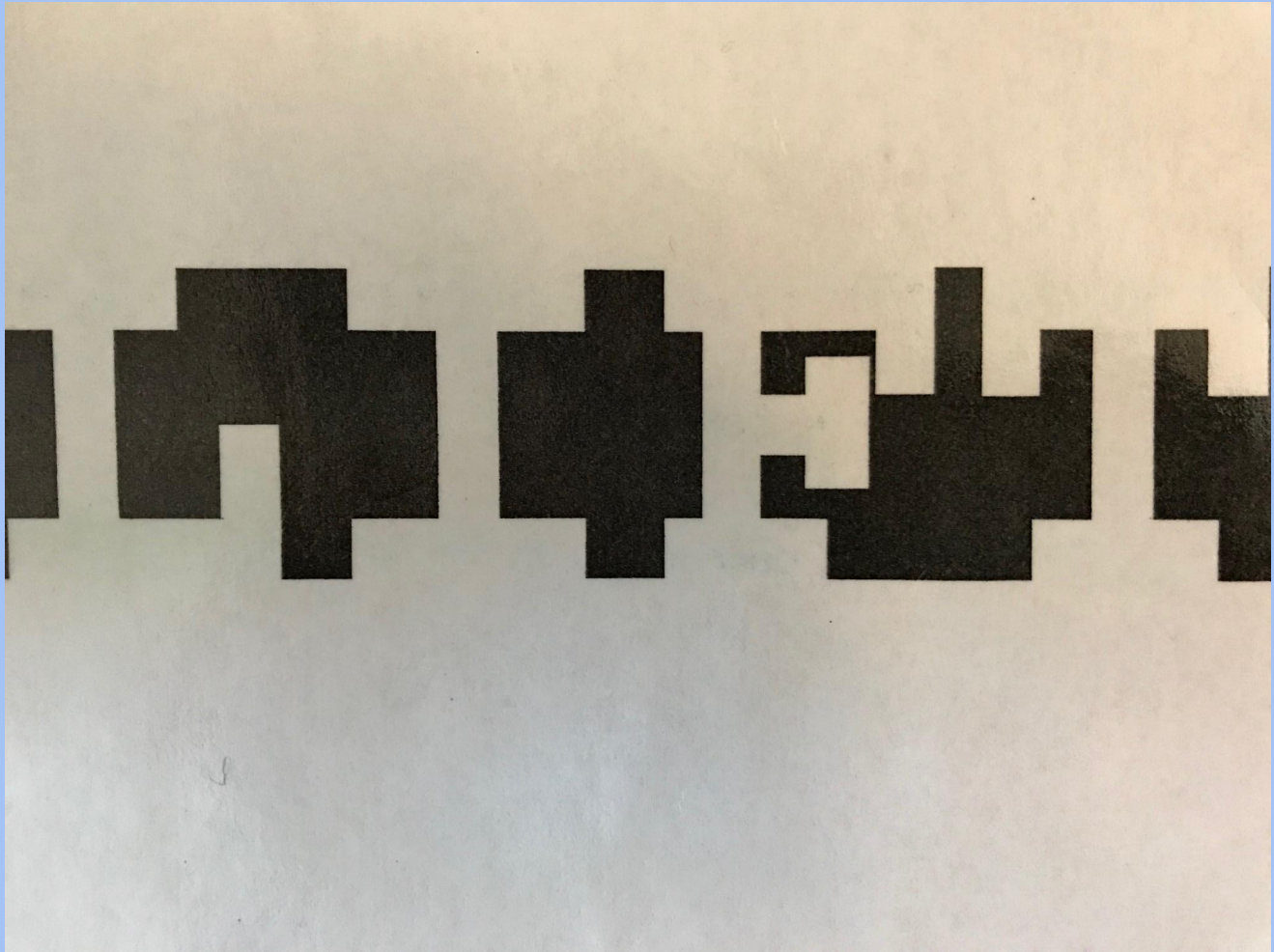
[Video: Looking closely](#)



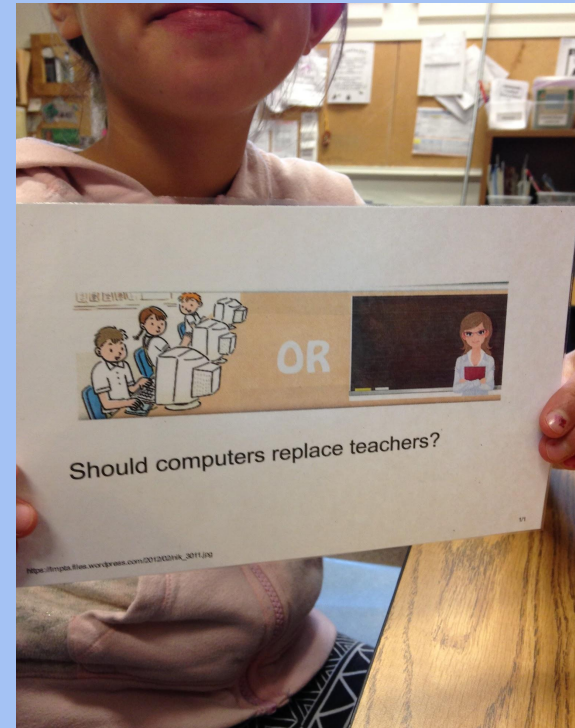
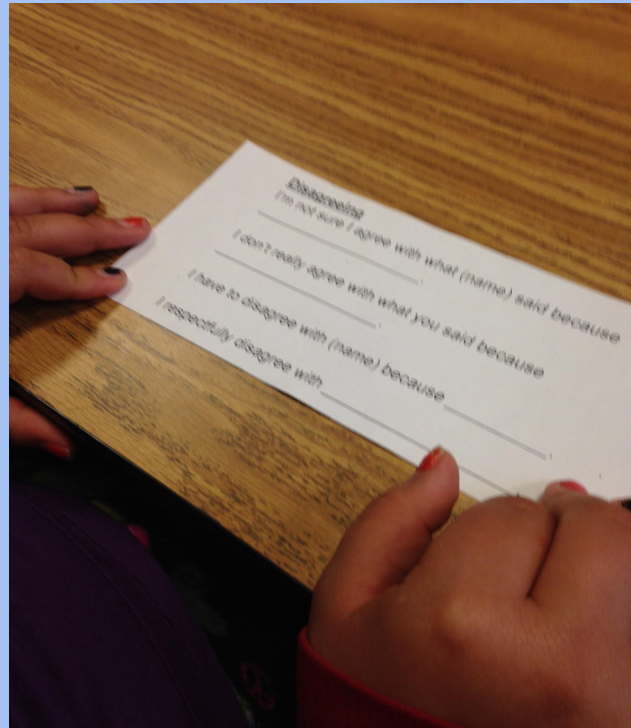
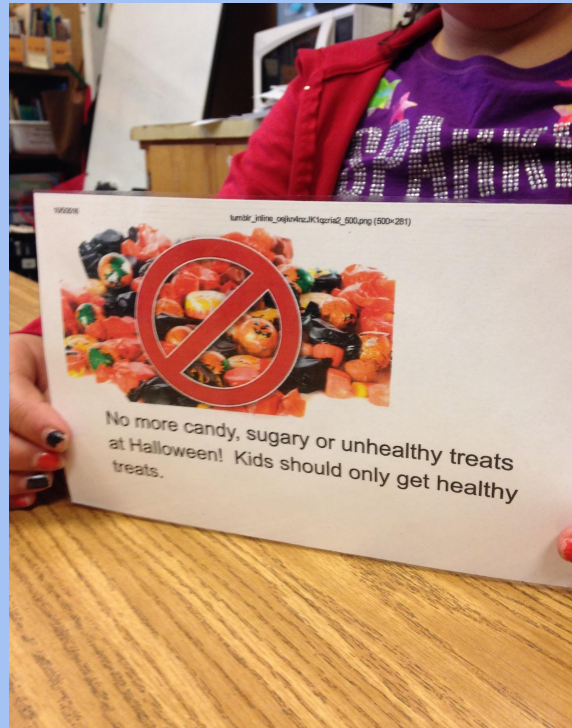


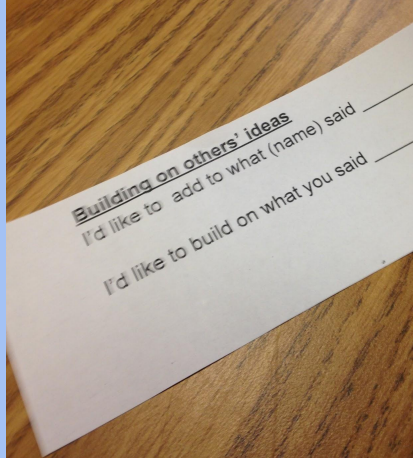
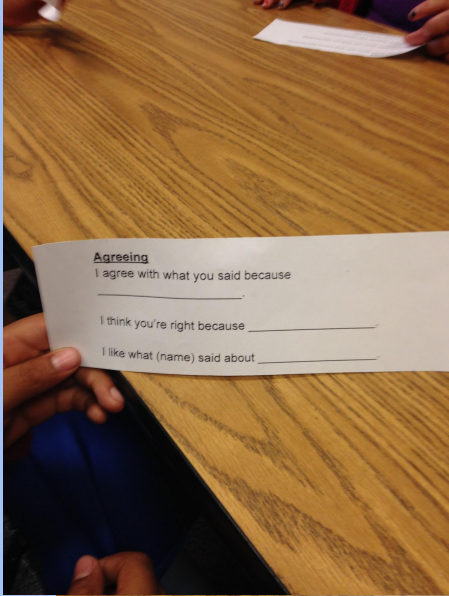
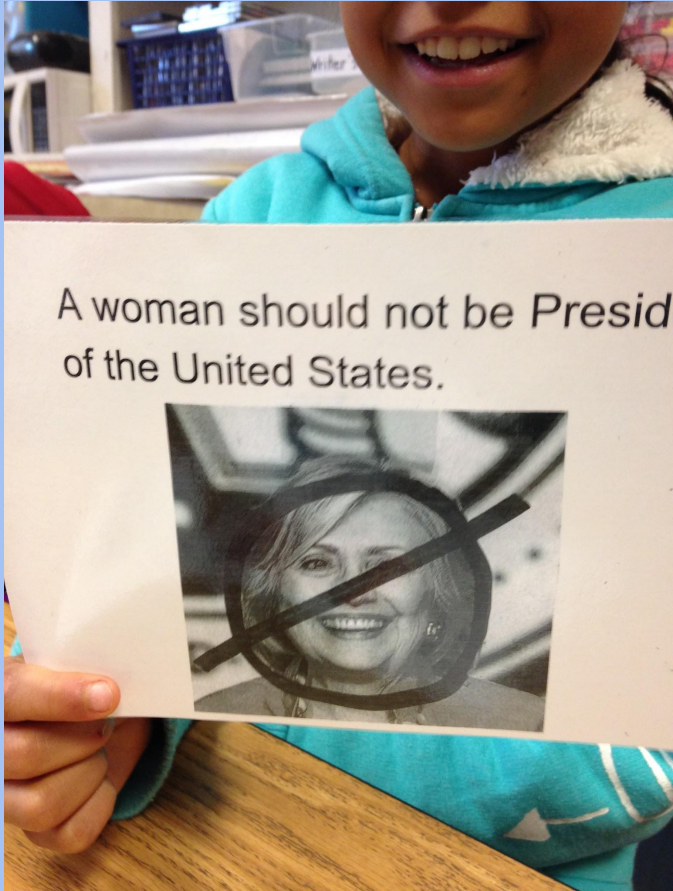






Mini-lesson #2: Agreeing, Disagreeing, and Building on Others' Ideas





Mini lesson #3:

Express a wonder,
pose a question,
say you don't understand

Express a wonder

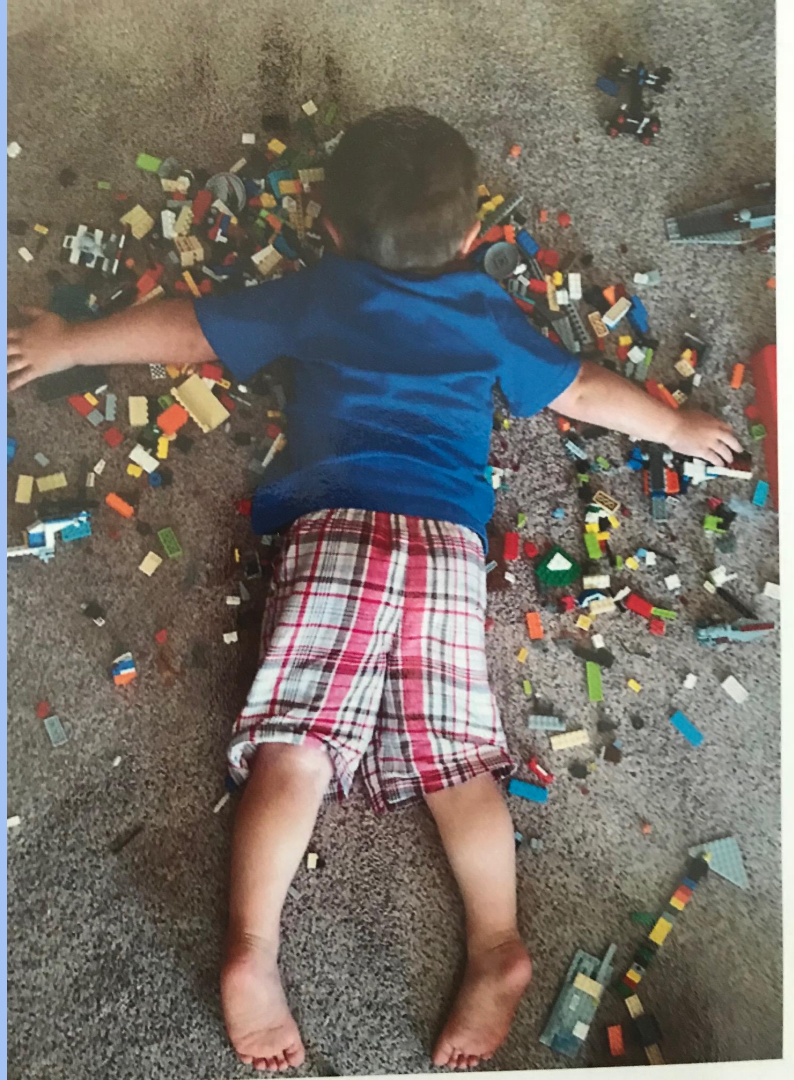
I wonder _____.

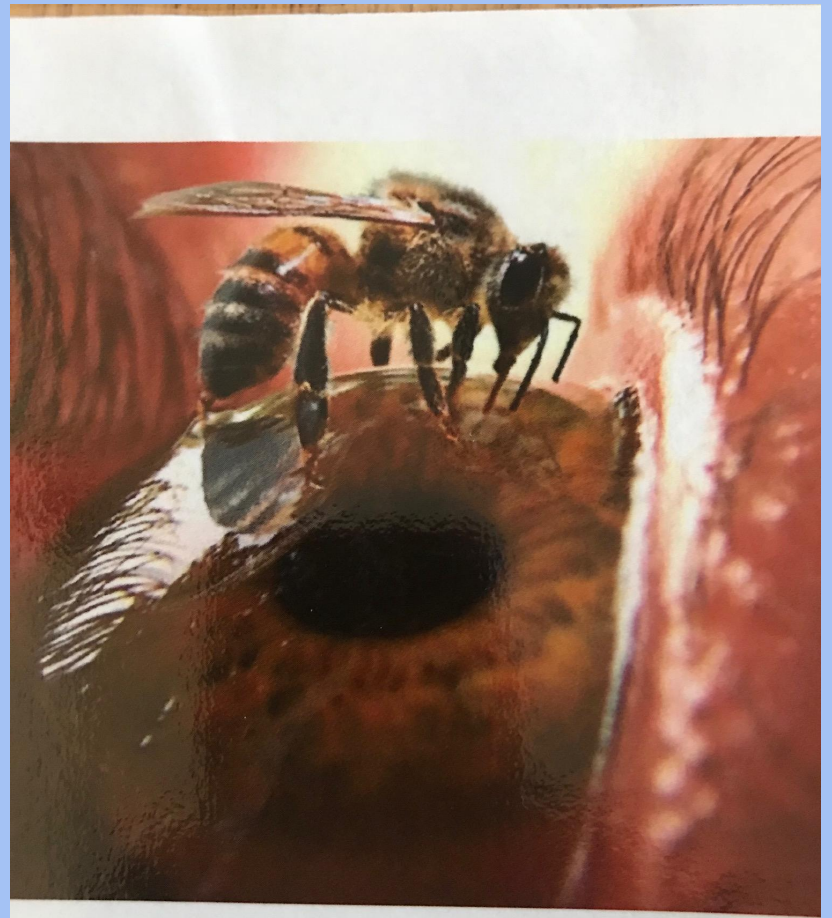
One thing I wonder
about is _____.

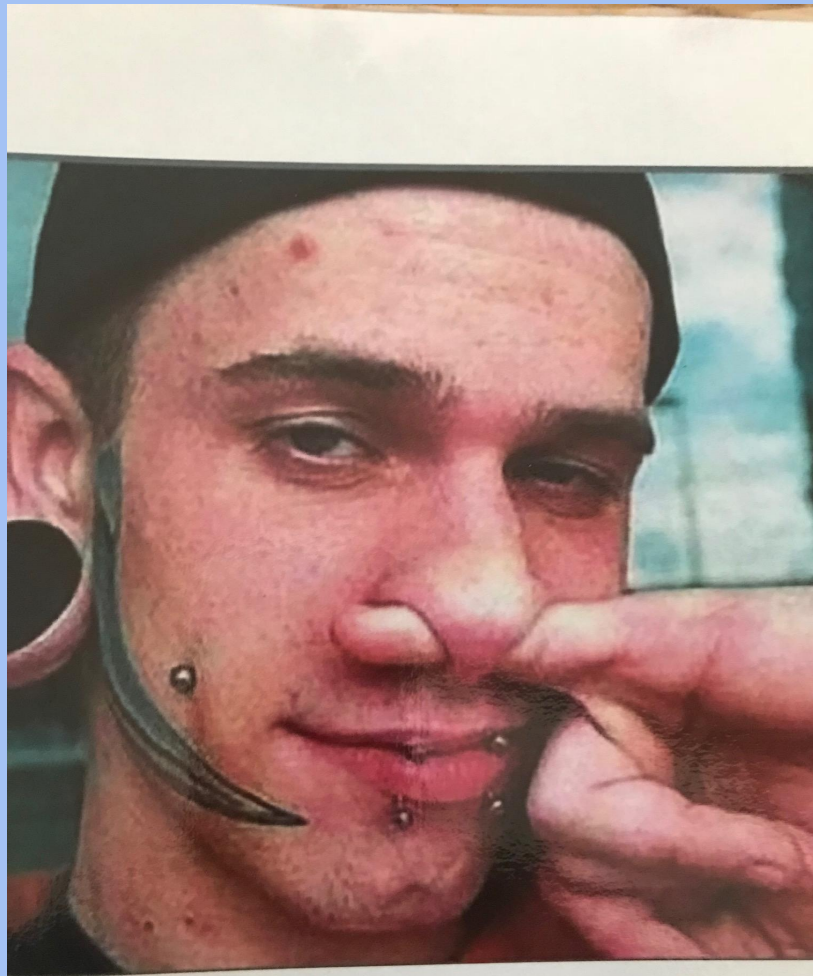
^{Pose/}
• Ask a question

One question I have is
_____.

Something I don't understand is...







Other mini-lessons:

- Inviting others to speak
- Being specific
- Asking for clarification
- Citing text evidence

Whenever you notice a skill or behavior students cannot perform with a high degree of proficiency, create a mini-lesson and let them practice!

Start Small!

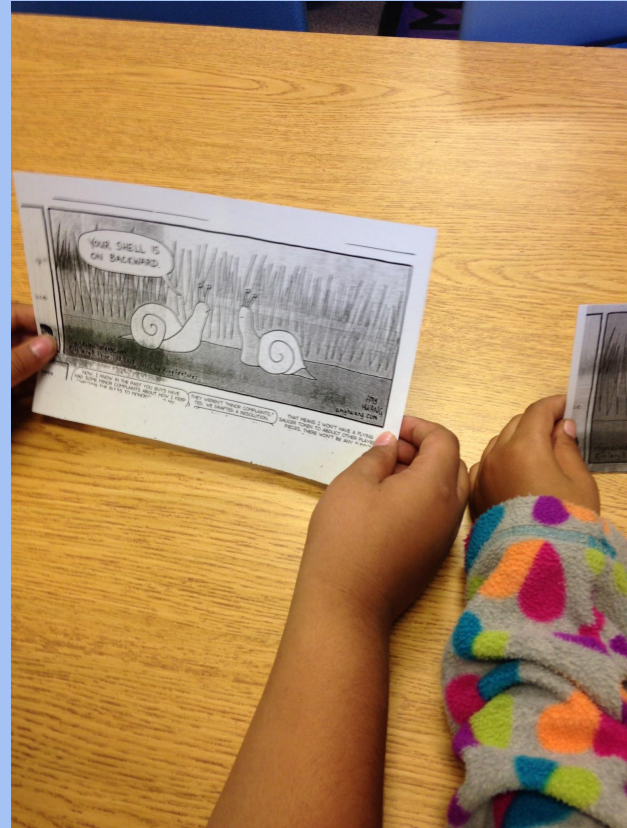
Begin with a 15-20 minute “Mini Seminar”

Rhymes with Orange cartoon

“Your shell is on backward.”

Leading question: Does it matter?

(rhymeswithorange.com)





"Mr. Osborne, may I be excused? My brain is full!"

Leading Question:
Is this possible?

1st Grade Example

Who was the most interesting?



Charlie



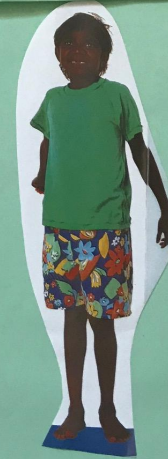
Carlitos

Why was he/she interesting?

Who would you like to have as a new friend? Why?



Samantha



Rosita

1st Grade Example

Whip Around:

What do you see?

What do you notice?

Who are these people?

What are they doing?

Leading Question:

What can we tell about this family?





Moving on to written texts

4th Grade example

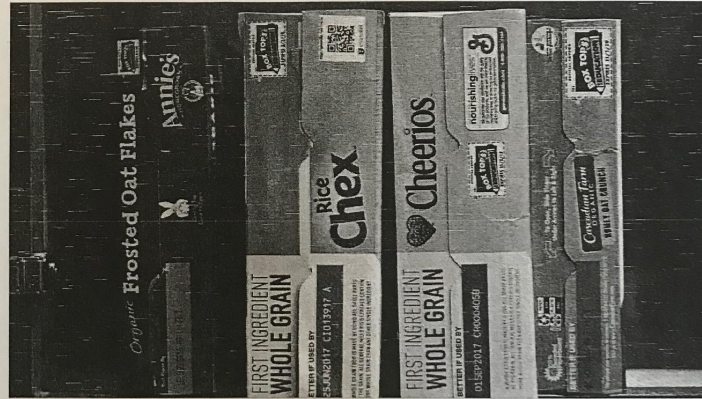
NEWSLA

Popular rewards program good for schools, bad for kids?

By The Washington Post, adapted by Newsela staff on 01.22.18

Word Count 459

Level 560L



Boxes of General Mills breakfast cereals in Tiskilwa, Illinois, on September, 20, 2016. Photo from: Bloomberg by Daniel Acker.

Labels-for-cash programs are popular. Many schools take part in them. In these programs, students and parents clip special labels from packages of food. It may be a bag of cookies or a box of cereal.

Schools collect these special labels. They send them to the food company. The school gets money in return.

School workers like these programs. They help raise extra money. The school can use it to buy supplies. They may buy pencils, markers or even playground toys.

4th Grade ELD Socratic Seminar “Who’s Your One?” (YouTube)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Im6c1QwcQ68>

Notice:

- Use of inner/outer circle
- Use of native language for NEP student
- Use of plastic chips to ensure equal participation
- Use of “note catcher”
- [Video](#)

Socratic Seminar Example - 4th grade ELD

Scaffolds Used

- Opening question given in advance
- “Whip Around”
- Sentence frame written on board: “I understood that...”
- Wait time
- Inner / Outer Circle



<https://goo.gl/pAEHpV>

5th Grade with Native Language Support

NEWSELA

Lucero October 29, 2020

against ← This is an opinion article
agree ←

PRO/CON: Should we celebrate Christopher Columbus? ← question

By Silvio Laccetti, McClatchy Tribune, and Los Angeles Times Editorial Board, adapted by Newsela staff on 10.06.17
Word Count 738
Level 840L



A statue of Christopher Columbus stands in Providence, Rhode Island. Photo by: Kenneth C. Zirkel/Wikimedia Commons

PRO: History shows that Columbus is worth celebrating

① Monuments honoring Christopher Columbus are being vandalized and destroyed. This year's Columbus Day will spark debate over celebrating the explorer. However, looking at Columbus in the big picture of history proves today's anger with him is misguided.

② First, let's consider the explorer's role in spreading European disease, mainly smallpox. Estimates say smallpox killed 70 to 80 percent of Native Americans. These deaths happened over many decades. Holding Columbus responsible does not make sense. Also, calculating an

A FAVOR/EN CONTRA: ¿Deberíamos celebrar a Cristóbal Colón?

By Silvio Laccetti, McClatchy Tribune, and Los Angeles Times Editorial Board on 10.06.17
Word Count 922
Level 840L



Una estatua de Cristóbal Colón en Providence, Rhode Island. Foto de Kenneth C. Zirkel/Wikimedia Commons

A FAVOR: La historia muestra que debemos celebrar a Colón

Las estatuas en honor a Cristóbal Colón están siendo destruidas y pintadas. Este año, Columbus Day causará una gran discusión sobre este explorador. En algunos países latinoamericanos esta festividad se conoce como el Día de la Raza. Si pensamos en Colón y su papel dentro de la historia, nos daremos cuenta de que la ira en contra de él es equivocada.

Primero debemos hablar del papel de Colón en el contagio de enfermedades europeas. La principal enfermedad que trajo fue la viruela y se cree que esta mató entre 70 y 80 por ciento de los indígenas americanos. Pero esas muertes sucedieron durante muchas décadas y responsabilizar a Colón no tiene sentido. Además, saber el verdadero número de muertes es imposible. Esto se debe a que hay muchos cálculos diferentes sobre las poblaciones de esos

Checking in

What are we seeing?

Rethinking our Socratic Seminars!!!!



Qué? You Don't Know The 3 Pillars of Dual Language?

By Dual Language S... 📅 November 28, 2017 💬 0 Comments 📖 7 Min. Read



Dr. José L. Medina is the Director of Dual Language and Bilingual Education at the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) in Washington DC. In this role, Dr. Medina provides dual language technical assistance, professional development, and job-embedded support to dual language programs across the United States and globally. He is a former dual language school principal and has served as an administrator and educator at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Dr. Medina is one of the authors of the third edition of the widely-used Guiding Principles for Dual Language

Education and also serves as the Director of the National Dual Language Forum. Dr. Medina can be reached via email at jmedina@cal.org or follow him on Twitter [@josemedinajr89](https://twitter.com/josemedinajr89).

The 3 Pillars of Dual Language



Pillar 1: Bilingualism/Biliteracy

Considerations:

Student groupings- homogeneous vs heterogeneous?

Language of text(s)- Provide in one language only? Which one? Both languages? Student choice?

Language of Seminar- English only? Dominant language? Second language? **Translanguaging**? What is teacher's language background and level of proficiency

Pillar 3: Sociocultural Competence

It's Insane That Anyone

Goes Camping from the blog "The Hairpin" by Kelly Conaboy

May 4, 2017

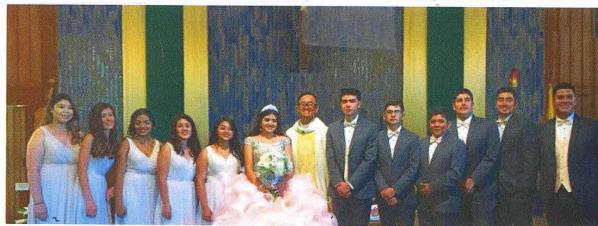


As a rule I like my opinion pieces to be airtight and unimpeachable. As a reader, you've come to expect this from me. I know. Because of that I'd like to warn you that this

①



②



③



④



Other considerations...

- Socratic Seminars are not a school wide practice at this point in time
- Realistic expectations at the elementary level
Exposure vs Mastery
- Structure of seminars

Reflections and Learnings (Cecy...)

- Groupings
- Talking points

Other Members of our 4th Grade Team: Micah and Ale

Experience getting started with Socratic Seminars in 4th grade.

How's it going?

What are the benefits you see from having students do them on a regular basis?

Challenges?

Questions?

Thoughts?

Suggestions?

