

# The Vision



**Socrates believed that enabling students to think for themselves was more important than filling their heads with “right answers.”**

# The Vision



**Participants seek deeper understanding of complex ideas through rigorously thoughtful dialogue, rather than by memorizing bits of information.**

# What are Socratic Seminars?

- Usually range from 30 – 50 minutes.
- An effective Socratic Seminar creates dialogue as opposed to debate.



# What are Socratic Seminars?

A close examination of a subject with interchange of opinions and ideas - especially when open and frank and seeking mutual understanding.

Collective inquiry in which we suspend opinions, share openly and think creatively about difficult issues.

## Four Elements of Socratic Seminar



**1. The text**

**2. The questions**

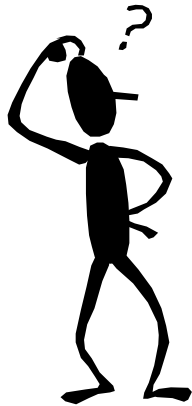
**3. The seminar leader**

**4. The seminar participants**



**The Text**

**Socratic Seminar texts are chosen for their richness in ideas, issues, and values, and their ability to stimulate extended, thoughtful dialogue.**



## **The Question(s)**

- ? An effective opening question leads participants back to the text as they speculate, evaluate,

define and clarify the issues involved.

? Opening question has no right answer.



## The Leader

Plays a dual role as leader and participant.

Helps participants clarify their positions.

Involves reluctant participants while restraining vocal students.

**Must be patient enough to allow understanding to evolve.**

**Helps participants explore new**



**interpretations.**

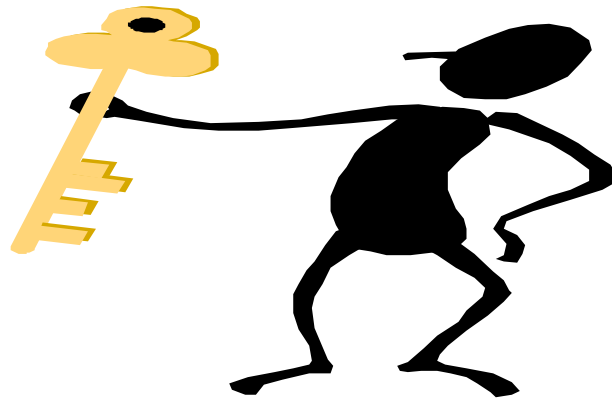
## **The Participants**

Most effective when participants:

- **Study the text closely in advance**



- **Listen actively**
- **Share their ideas and questions in response to others**



- **Refer to text to support their ideas**

## Seminar Procedures: the Keys to Success

- **Choose and read text carefully**
- **Craft the opening question**
- **Review seminar procedures**

➤ **Conduct the seminar**

➤ **Debrief the seminar**