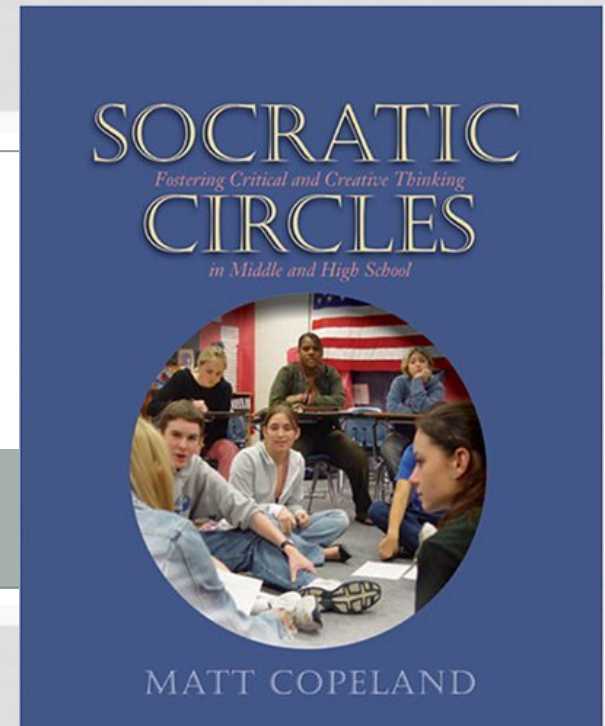


SOCRATIC CIRCLES

EMPOWERING STUDENT CENTERED DIALOGUE

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LEARNING GOALS

The participant will...

- Examine the importance of student-centered dialogue for learning
- View an example Socratic Circle in action
- Discuss the implementation of Socratic Circles into his or her classroom



PRIOR DISCUSSION EXPERIENCE IN THE CLASSROOM



- Typically, who asks the questions in a discussion?
- Ultimately, who answers the questions in a discussion?
- Who does most of the talking in a discussion?

TOO MUCH TEACHER TALK?

In one study of 1,151 classroom discussions occurring in over 200 eighth and ninth grade classrooms:

- 93.31% (1074 discussions) were completely monologic (teacher-centered) in nature
- Of the 6.69% (77) that included “dialogic episodes” (moments when students directed the conversation), those episodes lasted for an average of 15 seconds

(Nystrand et al., 2003)

TOO MUCH TEACHER TALK?

In a national survey of teacher perspectives on pedagogy, 95% of English language arts teachers reported valuing peer discussion, yet only 33% of those same teachers regularly make room for it.

(Commeyras and DeGroff, 1998)

COI'S FIVE RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE ADOLESCENT LITERACY

1. Provide explicit instruction and practice in the use of comprehension strategies.
2. **Increase the amount and quality of open, sustained discussion of reading content.**
3. Set and maintain high standards for text, conversation, questions, and vocabulary.
4. Increase students' motivation and engagement with reading.
5. Teach essential content knowledge so that all students master critical concepts.

(Torgesen, et al., 2007)

USDE'S FIVE RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE ADOLESCENT LITERACY

1. Provide explicit vocabulary instruction.
2. Provide direct and explicit comprehension strategy instruction.
3. **Provide opportunities for extended discussion of text meaning and interpretation.**
4. Increase student motivation and engagement in literacy learning.
5. Make available intensive and individualized interventions for struggling readers.

(Kamil et al., 2008)

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

“To become college and career ready, students must have ample opportunities to take part in a variety of rich, structured conversations...

Whatever their intended major or profession, high school graduates will depend heavily on their ability to listen attentively to others so that they are able to build on others’ meritorious ideas while expressing their own clearly and persuasively” (p 48).



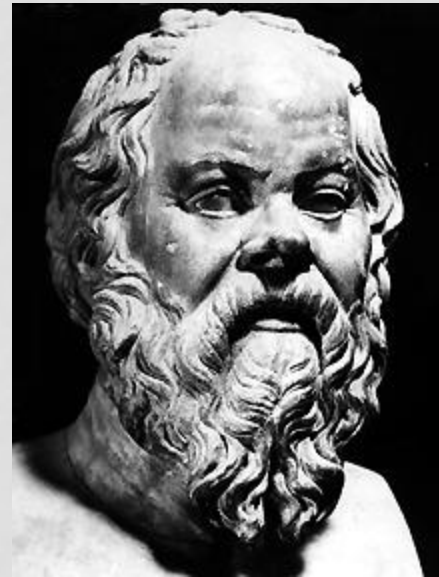
“The unexamined life is not worth living.”

—Socrates

WHO WAS SOCRATES?

Classical Greek philosopher
470(?) – 399 B.C.

“Socrates was the first to call philosophy down from the heavens and to place it in cities, and even to introduce it into homes and compel it to enquire about life and standards and good and ill.”
-- Cicero



SOCRATES AND THE THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

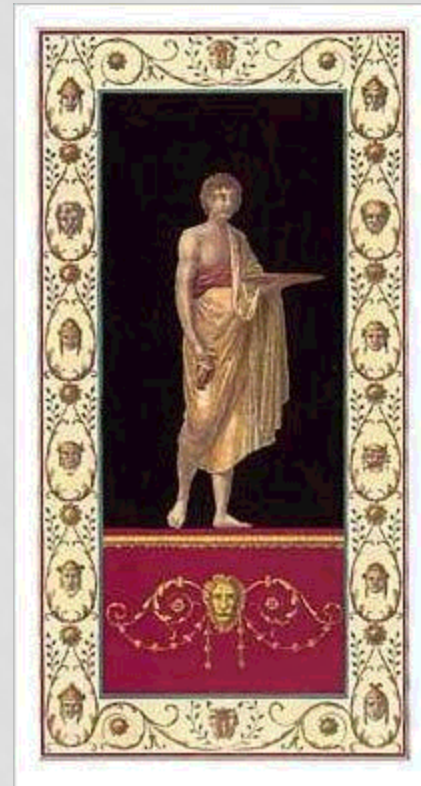


Socrates believed the answers to all human questions reside within us and that through disciplined conversation we can discover ultimate truth.

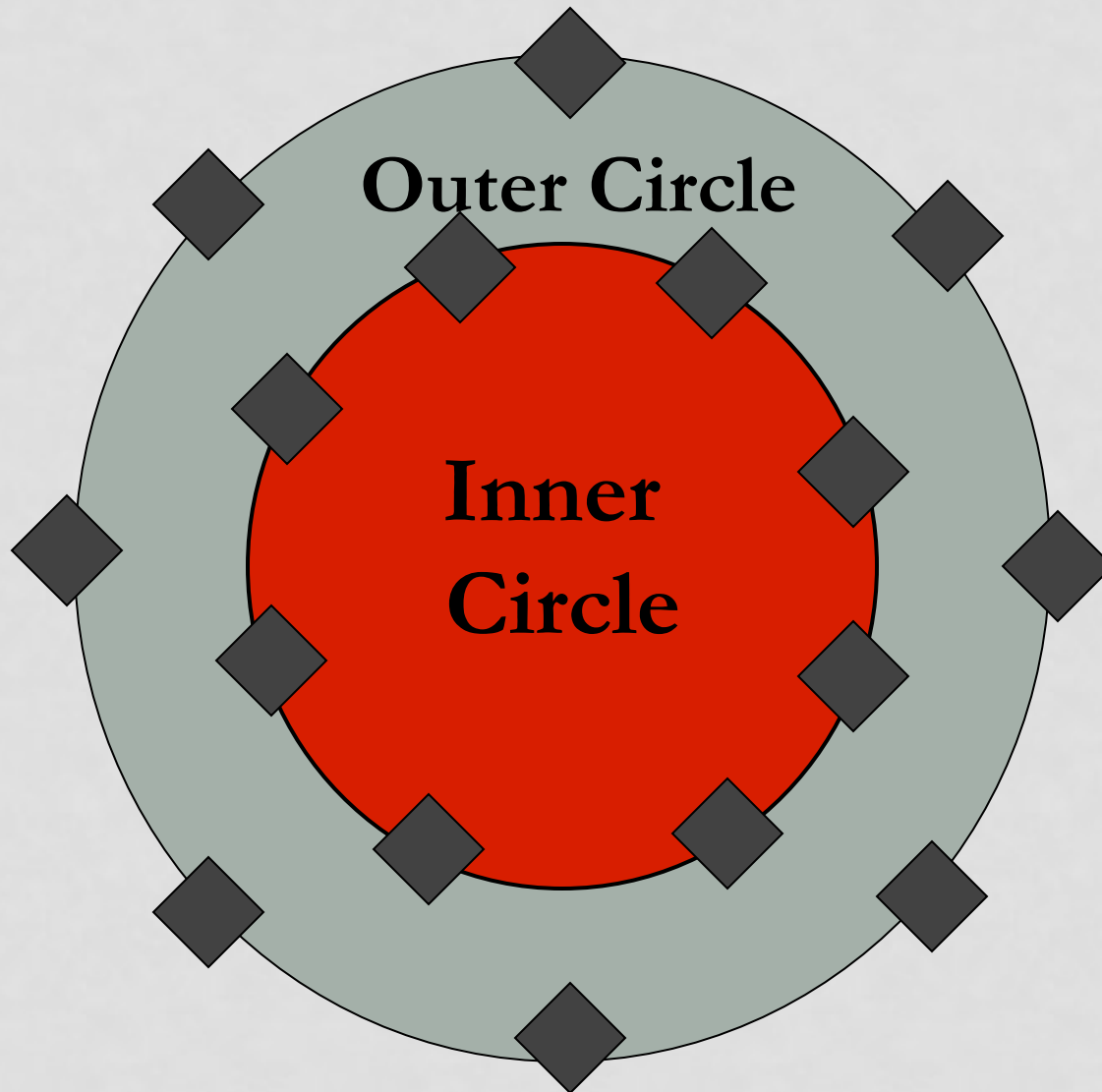
“Socrates declared that he knew nothing, except the fact of his ignorance.” --Diogenes Laertius

WHAT IS A SOCRATIC CIRCLE?

A constructivist strategy in which participants engage in a conversation to collectively seek a deeper understanding of complex ideas.



THE INNER AND OUTER CIRCLES



A SOCRATIC CIRCLE IN ACTION



“Wisdom begins in wonder.” --Socrates

A SOCRATIC CIRCLE IN ACTION

Three Video Examples:

Grade 2: <https://vimeo.com/105397457>

Grade 6: <https://vimeo.com/105396512>

Grade 10: <https://vimeo.com/54871334>

BENEFITS OF SOCRATIC CIRCLES



- Advances critical reading
- Spurs critical thinking
- Improves discussion and listening skills
- Increases vocabulary
- Provides student ownership, voice, and empowerment
- Allows students to synthesize both the knowledge-base and the skills-base of the curriculum

DRAWBACKS OF SOCRATIC CIRCLES

- Time consuming
- Discussion is often left without complete “closure”
- Discussion may arrive at a conclusion with which the teacher is unfamiliar
- Appears “unstructured” to the uninformed observer



HOW DO I MAKE SOCRATIC CIRCLES WORK?

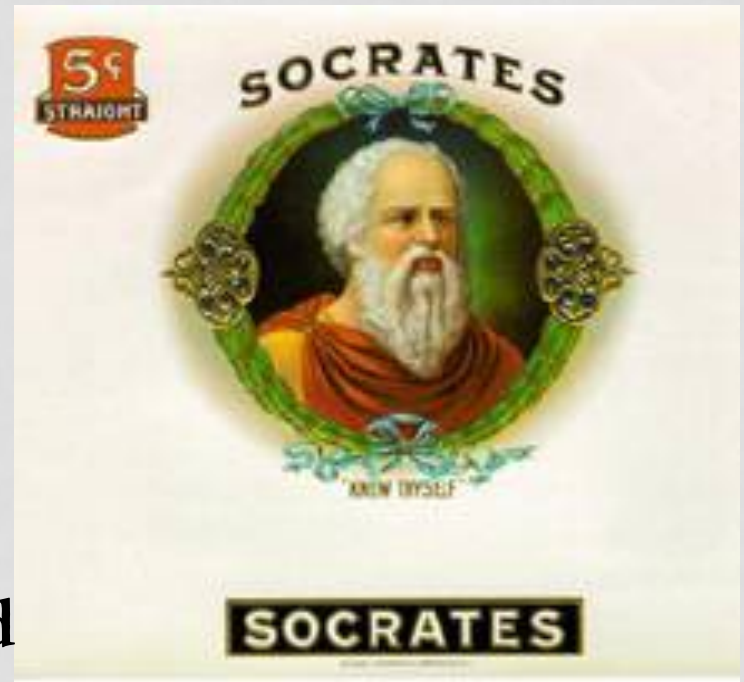


“Wisdom begins in wonder.” --Socrates

LEADING SOCRATIC CIRCLES

Five Jobs of the Leader:

- Preparing students for dialogue
- Selecting the text
- Guiding the inner circle
- Directing the outer circle
- Providing assessment and feedback



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Socratic Circles

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"When a child has a reason to learn, the basics will be sought after, rather than imposed."

CONTACT INFO AND FOLLOW-UP

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