

Student-Led Discussions  
That Are REALLY  
Student-Led

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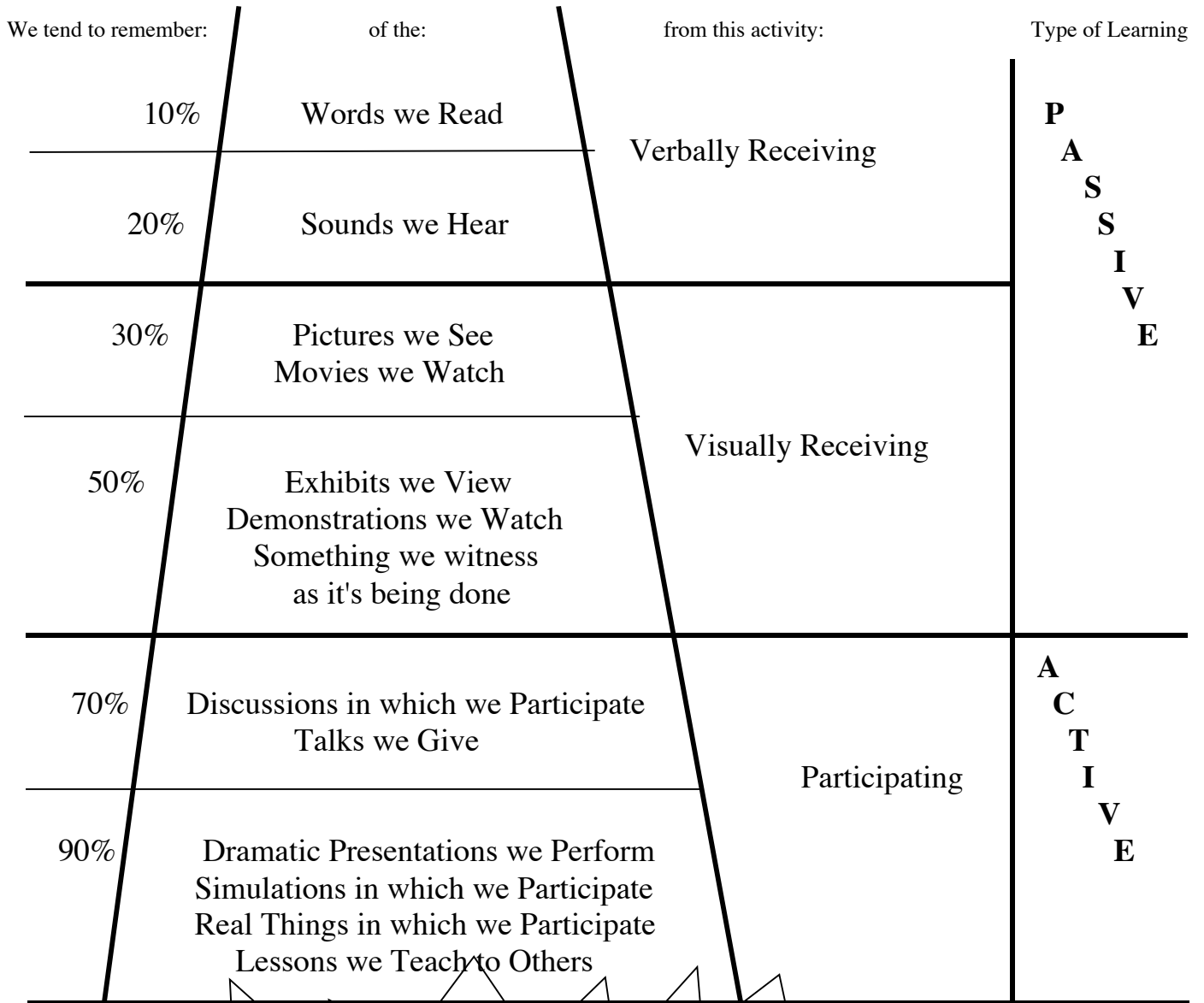
WE KNOW THAT STUDENTS RETAIN

20 % of what they learn through visual and aural means

50% of what they learn through a demonstration or an exhibit

70-90% of what they learn if they are giving a talk, participating in a class discussion, actually doing the real thing, or teaching someone else

## The Learning Pyramid



Students who are active  
in their learning WILL remember more.

Socratic Seminar:

## Socratic Seminar:

a type of classroom discussion which encourages more student participation

Socrates, the great teacher, did not answer questions.  
Instead, he led his pupils to find the answers themselves.  
That's what we will do in a Socratic Seminar.

### *Socratic Seminar*

vs.

### *Traditional Discussion*

**97% of the students participate.**

Students know  
the **teacher will not comment.**

**Students sit in a circle,**  
facing each other.  
All members of class have  
**eye contact with all others.**

Ave. response length = **10-12 seconds.**

**No teacher feedback** is allowed.  
**Students affirm each other.**

**Thinking, backed by evidence,**  
is paramount.  
Open-ended exploration is valued.

**Students listen to**  
**and respond to their peers.**

**Students have ownership** and  
responsibility for the success  
of the discussion.

**Students are held accountable—**  
based upon pre-agreed criteria.\*\*

**Teacher-talk is 97% of the discussion.**

Even if many students will respond,  
**teacher still elaborates and answers.**

**Students often sit in rows,**  
facing the teacher.  
All members of class have  
**eye contact with teacher only.**

Ave. response length = **2-3 seconds.**

**Teacher summarizes and reiterates.**  
**Students have little contact with each other.**

**Thinking stops when**  
**the correct answer is given.**  
Being correct is paramount.

**Students listen to the teacher,**  
who has the answers.

**Teacher has ownership** and  
responsibility for the success  
and flow of the discussion.

If students miss class,  
they "don't miss much"

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With Socratic Seminar, the focus is on the discussion  
Students know that teacher will not redirect them or give hints,  
so they must listen and respond to one another.

\*\*Ground rules and grading criteria are clearly explained  
and agreed upon BEFORE the Socratic Seminar

# Socratic Seminar

has four parts:

**Opening Question:** one general, introductory question; directs students to the text for the answer; relates to a more general topic, theme, or larger idea

EXAMPLES--From what you have read in the first two journal entries of "Flowers for Algernon," what kind of character is Charlie?

What evidence can you find to prove that Sal's mother has died?

What reasoning does the article give for NOT assigning homework to students?

**Core Questions:** 2- 5 questions which relate specifically to content; direct students to examine, evaluate, and interpret the information available in the text; require higher level thinking skills because responses are pulled from life experience, prior knowledge, and opinion; must be supported by evidence from the text, not pulled directly from the text

VARIATION--Have the students create these questions.

EXAMPLES-- From the companion article to "Flowers for Algernon," define *informed consent*.

Before his operation, is Charlie capable of giving "informed consent"?

What other evidence implies that Sal's mother is still alive? What do we learn about Sal when we learn that she has kept the secret of her mother's fate through the entire journey?

Is this author justified in saying that homework is "a scam"? Is unguided homework more harmful than helpful?

**Closing Question:** 1 final question; requires students to apply the situation to themselves or to the world; establishes relevancy of the discussion.

EXAMPLES--How would you refine the definition of *informed consent to allow for Charlie's case*?

How does reading about Sal help some people to deal with real life loss?

What can educators do to make homework more meaningful?

## Follow-up Assignment:

Each Socratic Seminar must have a follow-up assignment--something simple like a journal entry, a more involved essay, or a lab experiment to perform. The follow-up assignment rounds out the experience. It gives each student a chance to put down on paper some final thoughts which were brought up by the discussion or a chance to practice the ideas which were discussed.

### Ground Rules

Participate Actively-speaking, listening and drawing others into the discussion.

Respect the opinions and ideas of others.

Refrain from interrupting.

Support your ideas with evidence.

Cooperate in a friendly debate.

### Grading Criteria

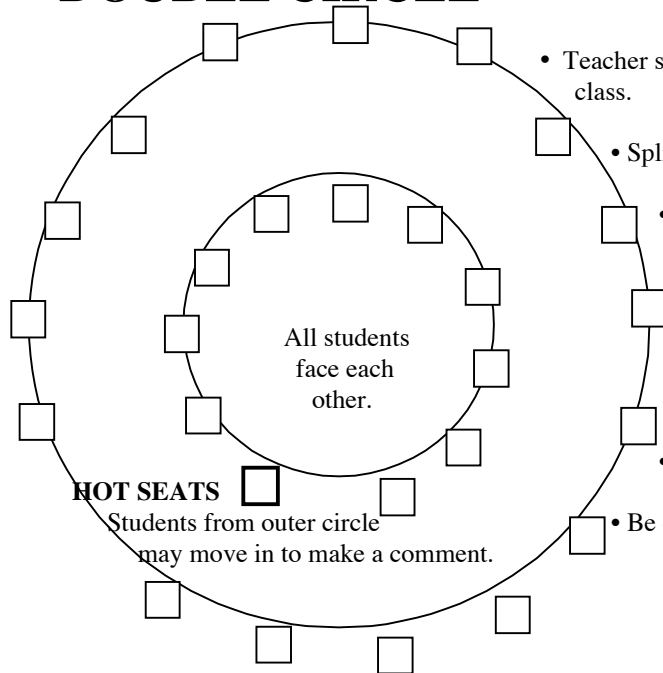
A = Speaks twice, with no rule infractions & at least I mark in all other columns.

B/C =Speaks at least once, may have one infraction, and a missing mark in one column.

D/E = Did not speak, or broke many rules when speaking. Has only one column marked.

# Seating Options for Socratic Seminar:

## DOUBLE CIRCLE

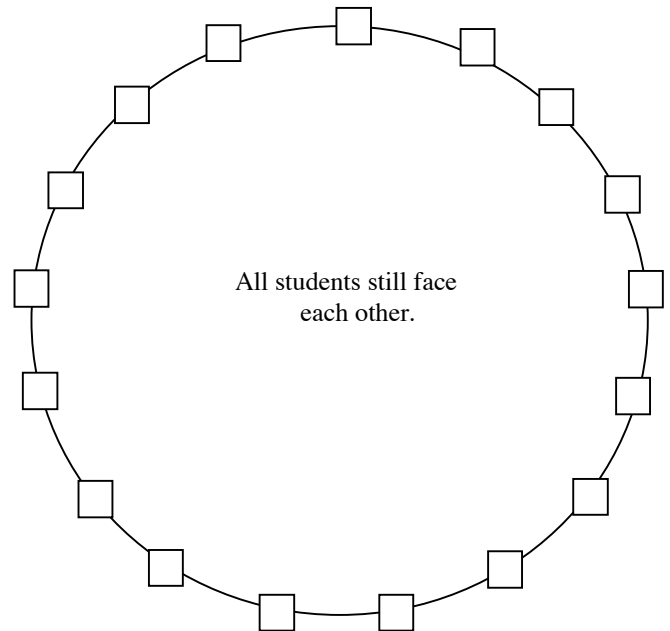


- Teacher sits in outer circle or completely outside the circle, separate from class.
- Split the class into two groups, inner and outer.
- Students who are not prepared to start out talking can prepare in the outer circle.
- Once prepared, they can move into HOT SEATS.
- Or, the outer circle can evaluate the inner circle. Then switch at a certain time.
- Or, the outer circle can take notes if seminar is a review.
- Be creative! This format has endless options!

This double circle is ideal for larger classes.

## SINGLE CIRCLE

- All students participate in the discussion.
- Students are expected to draw in those students who are reluctant to participate. (Of course, this behavior must be taught.)
- Teacher sits within the group, asking guiding questions and evaluating the students. However, teacher does not affirm incorrectness or correctness of responses.
- Or teacher can sit outside of the circle, separate from students.
- Students talk to each other, not to the teacher.



# The Homework Scam

*Everyone agrees that it's important for kids to bring schoolwork home...But they're wrong.*

by William Lenard

Adults seldom bring work home from the office. Ambitious professionals or budding entrepreneurs may find they have to spend evenings "on the job," but most workers leave for tomorrow what can't be done well for today.

So why do we expect children to do homework? Everyone agrees: It's important for children to bring work home from school. But this idea is as profoundly false as it is universally embraced. The media, educators, and parents all encourage a practice that is fraudulent and destructive to children's learning. Assigned homework promotes careless, sloppy work. It is too often an invitation to plagiarism and cheating. And it is balm for parents who think they are participating in their child's education by asking, "Did you finish your homework?"

In some instances, homework makes sense. If the assignment is a genuine learning experience, and if children have the time and desire to study, it can be useful. Specially crafted assignments may also be helpful for students struggling with a routine aspect of their work.

But when pupils are confused by their lessons in school, homework is worse than useless. It is nonsense to require a score of practice exercises when there is not a careful review of the work by someone who can correct mistakes and push for quality. Homework without such review merely ensures that poor habits and carelessness will be diligently practiced until the youngster becomes brilliantly proficient in making splendid errors.

Parents could provide this review, but they need the will, the time, and the knowledge. Truth is most parents do not have all three. As a mathematics teacher, I found that parents could undo hours of instruction in minutes by tackling a child's request for help with the attitude: "That isn't the way I learned it."

6 And although homework is seen as a valuable chance for children to learn, that opportunity is lost when assignments are graded using a check-off system that rewards students merely for completing the work. In such systems, the students who honestly struggle with an assignment but cannot complete it get penalized. Shrewd, less honest students, meanwhile, find cooperative classmates with completed work and engage in some creative emulation. The good grades awarded such bogus efforts foster a dangerous attitude about cheating: The grades, after all, reflect success, but not learning.

7 And what about the youngsters who have no place, time, or means to do work at home? Their family responsibilities are sometimes awesome, more awesome than those of some adults. What good is achieved when such students are embarrassed or ridiculed for incomplete or undone homework?

8 School officials know--or should know the waste of homework assignments, but they continue the charade and pressure teachers to promote the fiction that homework is essential. Public schools are under fire, and the public expects homework. In the simplistic terms often used to debate how to improve schools, more time is better, more homework is better, and quantity is easy to measure.

9 Sending children home toting book bags heavy enough to break a camel's back is not the answer, though. The school day now runs about seven and half hours, and if

students invest any major fraction of that time in serious mental work, they have done more with their intellect in one day than most adults do in a week. Study is intense and demanding.

10 Rather, we should schedule practice and application of new ideas during the school day. All disciplines should have laboratory periods where students can practice, and teachers should monitor that practice to ensure quality work and understanding.

11 You may have heard the story about a man walking in New York City with a violin case. A stranger approaches and asks, "How do I get to Carnegie Hall?" The man's response: "Practice, practice, practice." It's a mildly humorous anecdote that taps an obvious truth about success: Practice can work wonders.

12 But does practice have to take place at home to guarantee success? Youngsters spend many of their waking hours in school, away from home and family. They are expected to pay attention to their lessons every day, to cherish each teacher's words as if they were pearls. Give them a chance to put the pearls on a string while they are with the teacher. Application of new skills, practice of just-learned routines, and review of ideas should be done in school. Homework is best for most students when it is rare, optional, and specialized.

from *Teacher Magazine* vol. 138  
*William Lenard has taught business and finance for 30 years in New York state. He is a partner in Albertin Associates, developing instructional programs for schools, businesses, and industry.*

**Opening Question** Level One question. Find the answers in the text. However, this question should be general enough to allow for many different answers. This question is designed to be simple enough for all students to join in the conversation, yet stimulating enough that some thinking will begin.

**Opening Question:** What reasoning does the article give for NOT assigning homework to students?

**Core Questions** Level Two questions. Draw inferences using evidence provided in the text (and some evidence from personal experience.) These questions should focus on the different parts of the text: separate aspects of the argument, or different sections of the textbook chapter. These questions should allow for different judgments, but you should still insist that students provide evidence for their opinionated answers.

**Core Questions:**

- What are some of the good and bad results of homework?
- If homework is given so students can practice what they've learned, what are some better ways students could practice what they're learning?
- Is unguided homework more harmful than helpful?
- Why do parents want their children to have homework?
- Why do administrators force teachers to assign homework?
- Could better use be made of the regular school day--to include time for "homework" practice at school?
- Is this author justified in saying that homework is "a scam"?
- Is the author's initial claim about adults who “seldom bring work home from the office” even true?
- Even if it is true, is that really a good reason to eliminate homework for children?
- Can we compare adults' work at their jobs to children's work at school?

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**Closing Question** Level Three question. These questions will focus on one strand of the issue that the text addresses, then apply it to something outside of the text. A closing question will focus on something more like a theme statement, and students will have to apply what they've just learned from this text to a situation that has not been brought up yet.

**Closing Question:** What can we, as educators, do to make homework more meaningful?

**Follow-up Assignment:**

Each Socratic Seminar should be followed by an out-of-class assignment--something simple and immediate. An individual assignment gives each student the chance to show just what s/he got from the discussion. Even those who are too shy to speak can show that they were focused and listening.

# Beyond the Open Door: Enrolling All Students in AP English

by Diane Downey

North Eugene High School

Eugene, Oregon

What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child, that must the community want for all its children.

Any other ideal for our schools is narrow and unlovely; acted upon, it destroys our democracy.

-- John Dewey, 1899

## Putting Philosophy into Action

- 1 We educators do very well when it comes to making sure our own children get excellent educations. We read to them. We send them to preschools and to summer camps. We involve them in athletics and the arts. We prepare them for and push them into college-level courses in high school. Finally, we help them apply to and figure out how to pay for college. On the other hand, most parents who are of low socioeconomic status (SES) do not have the wherewithal, for myriad reasons, to negotiate our world of education to get the same outcome. That's why so few low-SES students end up in AP courses and, subsequently, in college. I believe that it is our moral imperative to act as parents by proxy, to educate all students as if they were our own.
- 2 North Eugene High School (NEHS) in Eugene, Oregon, is a low-SES school committed to preparing **every** student for college. Like NEHS, many schools across the nation offer AP English Language and Composition for their students. However, at most schools the course includes only the brightest students and/or the ones with savvy parents who push them into the college-prep track. For many years, the College Board has been encouraging schools to adopt an "open door" policy to allow a broader range of students access to AP courses. But opening the door is often not enough -- most students need a big push to walk on through.

## Limiting Choices

- 3 In September 2005, NEHS began pushing our students by "untracking" English, heterogeneously grouping all our juniors, and **requiring** them to take AP English. At NEHS, we've put students on the path to college by removing all other "paths of least resistance." Our school does not offer any other language arts class for eleventh-graders. Some students, parents, and teachers bemoan the loss of choice for students. I say choice is overrated. Honestly, given the choice, most students would choose sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll. Choice leads to students' segregating **themselves** into tracks and leads to inequality of education. Research shows that low-SES students lack structure at home and that they need more structure at school (Noguera 2006). Limiting student choice to college-level courses now expands their choices for the future. It's true that, despite our best efforts, many students simply won't go to college. But that doesn't mean they don't need AP courses. If high school is the last education those students are getting, then they need a rigorous course of study most of all.
- 4 Students' reflections at the end of the year support our ideas:

  - "The class is a good class to have students take, because it puts us all on the same level and challenges us all in different ways."
  - "To excuse students from this course would be depriving them of a great experience."
  - "I liked being forced to take this because it proves that even if you're at a lower level than someone else it doesn't mean you can't do well. If you try hard I think you can accomplish anything you want."
- 5 Recent research shows overwhelmingly that an intense academic experience in high school is the best predictor of success in college (Adelman 1999). The results hold regardless of a student's grades, test scores, and previous academic performance. Furthermore, even the lowest-skilled students make greater gains in college-level courses than in general or remedial courses (Barth 2003). Those who struggle with reading and writing **especially** need this curriculum. (Some would argue that it's the overweight kids who need P.E. the most. Should we excuse them because they're not in shape? No. In fact, it would be a good idea to have them make a few extra laps around the track.) Failure rates actually decrease when students are more challenged (Barth 2003; Riley 2002). And for students who don't go to college, the research shows that completion of a college-prep curriculum in high school predicts greater success in the world of work (Barth 2003).

## Closing the Achievement Gap

- 6 Many low-SES schools lack a culture of academic achievement. After less than one year of requiring that all eleventh-graders at our school take AP English, our librarian and our chemistry teachers noted that students were more academically focused. The achievement gap is as much a gap of culture as it is of learning. The gap exists in kindergarten readiness but then widens with the creation of reading level groups in elementary school. By the time kids get to high school, it seems unbreachable. However, we can close the gap in achievement by closing the gap in what we require of students, and we do that by delivering college-level curriculum to heterogeneously grouped students. In essence, it's our gap we need to close -- that is, the gap in **our** expectations of our students.
- 7 Say a school, we'll call it "ABC," adopts an open-door policy for AP, and they're so successful that 60 percent of their students complete AP courses. Those students are now more academically, intellectually, socially, and emotionally prepared to succeed in college and the working world. Not to denigrate ABC's efforts or success, but what about the other 40 percent who didn't walk through the door? It's likely that they're languishing in classes with the least-skilled teachers and the least-motivated peers, and they're living, at least subconsciously, with the knowledge that their futures are limited. ABC hasn't closed its achievement gap; it has just moved it.
- 8 Again, students in their own words testify to the power of our belief in them:
- "I thought if the school thought I could do this, then I could, so I tried harder to accomplish the goal of doing my best in AP."
  - "AP took me to a different level of learning that I did not know was there."
  - "The class helped a lot of students realize that they are smart and that they can make it through a tough class."
  - "In past years I didn't work to my full capabilities and now I want to exceed them."
  - "AP stands for Advanced Placement. Someone placed me in an advanced class because they had confidence that I would succeed, and now **I** have confidence that I will succeed."
  - "When I was first coming to this class, I thought I was being set up for failure, but it was just the opposite. I was being set up for the future."
- 9 We don't have time to build from the ground up when it comes to closing the achievement gap. Requiring AP English of all students provides downward academic pressure on teachers and students of lower grades. It's a signal to them that reform is happening now, and now is the time to step up.

## Facing Political Obstacles

- 10 Since we know that we should teach to maximize students' abilities rather than cater to their lack thereof, we must acknowledge that our policies can stand in the way of students' achievements. But policy change is politically thorny. An overwhelming majority of NEHS parents are thrilled that we're pushing our students to their highest academic potential. However, a few academically elite students and their parents raise voices **against** our teaching AP English to everyone. They worry aloud that the brightest students will be cheated by some inevitable degradation of curriculum that will come with the inclusion of all students. What is the real risk to them? Injured ego. We teach to the top. Academic support lifts struggling and average students up to AP level while ensuring that the curriculum retains its integrity for the superstars.
- 11 Are we serious about reforming education? If so, then we must stand tall to face those who say, "What are you trying to do? Reform education? Teach these kids to read and write? Not if it changes our world." We must not submit to a vocal minority comprising high-SES parents who would make public education private, administrators who lack the courage to face political fallout, and teachers who lack the vision to teach all students.
- 12 AP teachers, for their part, often have extraordinary ego invested in their students' AP Exam grades. They boast of their students' high grades and their percentage of students earning a 3 or higher. **Their** out-loud voices say, "It's cruel to subject incapable students to challenges they can't meet." But are they really more concerned with their own academic reputations as teaching superstars? This is not to say that grades are irrelevant, but if we are to teach all students in AP courses, we must tolerate having lower percentages of students passing. Given our commitment to rigorous curriculum, we will maintain our numbers of students earning grades of 3, 4, and 5, **and** our raw number of students earning a 3 or higher will greatly increase, because we are casting our net that much wider.

### Preparing for the Challenge

- 13 Including all students in AP English takes planning and preparation to meet the challenges. We began by revising our ninth- and tenth-grade language arts curriculum to provide more rigor. At each grade level, students read at least six novels and plays, write multiple literary analyses and creative pieces, and complete a research paper. Some assignments are fully processed in MLA style, and other writings are completed on-demand in class. Teachers cooperate with each other in creating and implementing curriculum, and each teacher keeps a portfolio of a representative student's work for the team to review at year's end.
- 14 Part of the ego involved with AP programs is the **perceived** exclusivity of the AP teacher club. If all students are to be AP students, then all teachers must be AP teachers in spirit and practice. Good administrative practice supports vertical articulation by encouraging every teacher to teach some AP courses **and** some ninth- or tenth-graders. To implement this paradigm shift, all our teachers went as a team to AP Summer Institute training. At the same time, we included middle school teachers in the training to provide for our vertical articulation. In addition, subscription to the College Board's AP SpringBoard® program of diagnostic assessment, instructional resources, and professional development for grades 6 through 12 is affordable for many schools and gives a great boost to students and teachers working to raise standards of performance for all.
- 15 As teachers challenge students to read more difficult texts, they will discover reading comprehension problems. We diagnose for reading problems in ninth grade and make coenrollment in a reading remediation program mandatory for students who need help. We use a program called Read Right. Another popular program is Read 180.

### Implementing the Plan

- 16 After preparing imperfectly, given limited time and resources, we began our program in September 2005. Three teachers at our school taught 224 juniors in eight sections of AP English Language and Composition integrated with American literature. Our program includes the following elements:
- We see our students every other day, on an A/B schedule.
  - The alternate day is reserved for a class called AP Support, in which a student is enrolled when his or her grade drops below a C. (See "Providing Support for Struggling Students" in More, below.)
  - The teachers of the course collaborate to provide the same curriculum nearly simultaneously to all sections of students.
  - We require all students to take the AP Exam in May -- either the official exam or a previous year's exam administered in the classroom on the same day for a grade in the course. This ensures that all students maintain a serious interest in the curriculum and in exam preparation.
  - We encourage teachers to communicate regularly with parents and support staff. One method is to create an email group and then send out weekly messages that outline assignments due for the next two weeks, including reading schedules and attachments of assignment prompts. Teachers could also communicate with a Web page posting.

### Reflecting and Looking Ahead

- 17 The best judges of our success are our students themselves. One student represents many others' changed outlooks: "I know that I can do anything I want as long as I believe in myself, and this course has taught me that." Our students personify the research that supports teaching an academically intense curriculum to **all** high school students, thereby providing for their future success (Adelman 1999). Last year was a challenge for us, as it was for our students, and we anticipate that this year will be challenging, too. But we have learned from our experience so far, and the culture of our school is changing. Last spring, 97 juniors took the official AP English Language and Composition Exam, and we'll work on increasing that number this year. We are secure that the College Board is on our side, and we're making good use of their support people, trainings, and materials. When faced with the criticism of skeptics and cynics, we cling tightly to the courage of our convictions that **every** student is worthy of the best of educations. Our reforms are a vote of confidence in our students and an investment in their dignity as human beings. Over 100 years later, we are taking a step toward fulfilling John Dewey's vision of equality, a vision of public education for a true democracy.

For the entire article, go to AP Central. You'll have to sign up to gain access.

## Inner/ Outer Circle has two parts:

**Outer Circle:** Students write and ask their own questions.

- coaching and modeling required
- Sometimes I give my students a few sample questions.
- When the process is still new to them, I give class time for writing questions.
- Students must have their questions when they enter the classroom.
- I take up questions to grade for content at the end of the circle event.
- There is no set order for questions.

Options for keeping Outer Circle engaged:

- o Students must listen to discussion to know when's the best time to ask the next question.
- o Students must take notes to use in answers they'll provide when they appear in inner circle.
- o Students receive points for asking impromptu questions which arise out of the discussion.
- o Students receive points for redirecting questions when inner circle does not answer adequately.
- o With hot seats, students can earn points for clearing up an argument in the inner circle.

**Inner Circle:** Students discuss answers to the outer circle's questions.

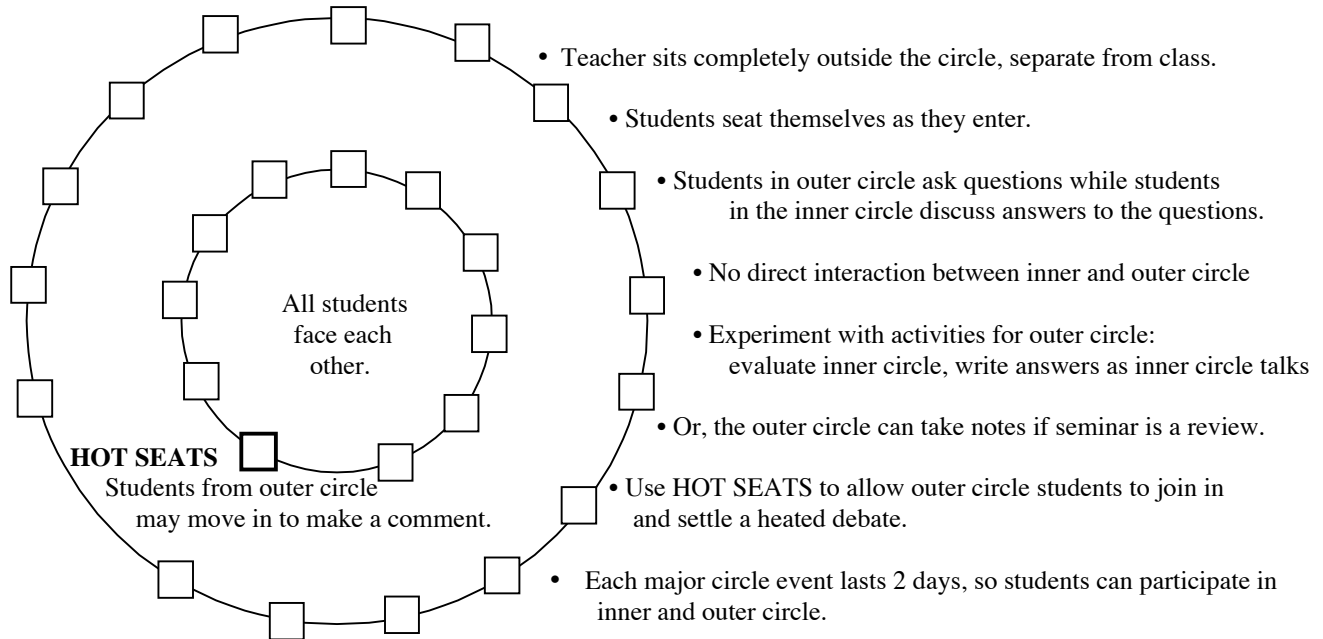
- coaching and modeling required
- My students get at least one practice run--not graded.
- In a practice run, I will stop them to redirect and comment.
- In the real thing, I will not stop them, no matter how off track they find themselves.

Options for keeping Inner Circle focused:

- o Students lose points for hogging the conversation.
- o Students have a certain number of candies which they may eat when they speak. When the candies are gone, they may not speak any more.
- o Students have a certain number of pennies which they may toss into a hat when they speak. When the pennies are gone, they may not speak any more.
- o Students receive points for successfully pulling in a reticent member of the circle, getting a quiet person to join the conversation.
- o Students receive points for settling an argument with evidence from the novel.
- o Students receive points for making a logical argument or quoting from the book.
- o Students receive points for using their dialectical journals in the conversation.

## Seating Tips for Inner/Outer Circle:

### TWO CIRCLES



### GRADING CRITERIA FOR THE CIRCLE DISCUSSION:

These are the things I'm looking for when I grade.

- brought questions
- asked questions
  - Level 2
  - Level 3questions that spark good debate
- answered questions
  - using complete sentences/paragraphs
  - with evidence from novel
  - listened actively as well as spoke
  - (didn't hog conversation and didn't remain silent)
- remained actively engaged in the conversation throughout the hour

## **OUTER CIRCLE ASSIGNMENT:**

When you are in the outer circle, your job is to LISTEN to the inner circle discussion. You will lose points by asking a question when the others are still talking or looking up answers or by otherwise showing that you weren't really paying attention to their discussion.

Today, you need to complete the following tasks as you sit in the outer circle. My hope is that these tasks will help you to LISTEN more actively to the inner circle discussion. Your answers must be specific and thorough.

1. Write here your favorite question of the hour:

What did you like about this question?

2. Describe here the answer which you thought was most balanced between evidence and commentary:
3. Why is it a good idea to balance evidence and commentary?
4. Write an answer that you would've liked to have discussed if you had been part of this circle. Make sure you refer to the question and use evidence and commentary.

## **IDEAS FOR KEEPING THE OUTER CIRCLE ENGAGED:**

Have outer circle highlight questions on their paper as they ask them and summarize the answer given by the inner circle. Ask them to listen for similar questions and do the same thing on their paper when another student asks a question that's LIKE one they wrote. Ask them to write a better answer to one question that they felt wasn't answered well enough. This is due at the end of the hour. These are things they must do as the discussion is going on, so when they turn in their questions at the end of day 2, I'll have something a little bit different to grade, not just their preparation but their participation as well.

# The Story of an Hour

by Kate Chopin

- 1        Knowing that Mrs. Mallard was afflicted with a heart trouble, great care was taken to break to her as gently as possible the news of her husband's death. It was her sister Josephine who told her, in broken sentences, veiled hints that revealed in half concealing. Her husband's friend Richards was there, too, near her. It was he who had been in the newspaper office when intelligence of the railroad disaster was received, with Brently Mallard's name leading the list of "killed." He had only taken the time to assure himself of its truth by a second telegram, and had hastened to forestall any less careful, less tender friend in bearing the sad message.
- 2        She did not hear the story as many women have heard the same, with a paralyzed inability to accept its significance. She wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in her sister's arms. When the storm of grief had spent itself she went to her room alone. She would have no one follow her.
- 3        There stood, facing the open window, a comfortable, roomy armchair. Into this she sank, pressed down by a physical exhaustion that haunted her body and seemed to reach into her soul.
- 4        She could see in the open square before her house the tops of trees that were all aquiver with the new spring life. The delicious breath of rain was in the air. In the street below a peddler was crying his wares. The notes of a distant song which some one was singing reached her faintly, and countless sparrows were twittering in the eaves. There were patches of blue sky showing here and there through the clouds that had met and piled one above the other in the west facing her window.
- 5        She sat with her head thrown back upon the cushion of the chair, quite motionless, except when a sob came up into her throat and shook her, as a child who has cried itself to sleep continues to sob in its dreams.
- 6        She was young, with a fair, calm face, whose lines bespoke repression and even a certain strength. But now there was a dull stare in her eyes, whose gaze was fixed away off yonder on one of those patches of blue sky. It was not a glance of reflection, but rather indicated a suspension of intelligent thought.

7        There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. What was it? She did not know; it was too subtle and elusive to name. But she felt it, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, the color that filled the air.

8        Now her bosom rose and fell tumultuously. She was beginning to recognize this thing that was approaching to possess her, and she was striving to beat it back with her will—as powerless as her two white slender hands would have been.

When she abandoned herself a little whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips. She said it over and over under her breath: “free, free, free!” The vacant stare and the look of terror that had followed it went from her eyes. They stayed keen and bright. Her pulses beat fast, and the coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body.

9        She did not stop to ask if it were or were not a monstrous joy that held her. A clear and exalted perception enabled her to dismiss the suggestion as trivial.

10       She knew that she would weep again when she saw the kind, tender hands folded in death; the face that had never looked save with love upon her, fixed and gray and dead. But she saw beyond that bitter moment a long procession of years to come that would belong to her absolutely. And she opened and spread her arms out to them in welcome.

There would be no one to live for her during those coming years; she would live for herself. There would be no powerful will bending hers in that bland persistence with which men and women believe they have a right to impose a private will upon a fellow-creature. A kind intention or a cruel intention made the act seem no less a crime as she looked upon in that brief moment of illumination.

And yet she had loved him—sometimes. Often she had not. What did it matter! What could love, the unsolved mystery, count for in face of this possession of self-assertion which she suddenly recognized as the strongest impulse of her being!

11       “Free! Body and soul free!” she kept whispering.

Josephine was kneeling before the closed door with her lips to the keyhole, imploring for admission. “Louise, open the door! I beg; open the door—you will make yourself ill. What are you doing, Louise? For heaven’s sake open the door.”

12       “Go away. I am not making myself ill.” No; she was drinking the very elixir of life through that open window.

- 13 Her fancy was running riot along those days ahead of her. Spring days, and summer days, and all sorts of days that would be her own. She breathed a quick prayer that life might be long. It was only yesterday she had thought with a shudder that life might be long.
- 14 She arose at length and opened the door to her sister's importunities. There was a feverish triumph in her eyes, and she carried herself unwittingly like a goddess of Victory. She clasped her sister's waist, and together they descended the stairs. Richards stood waiting for them at the bottom.
- 15 Some one was opening the front door with a latchkey. It was Brently Mallard who entered, a little travel-stained, composedly carrying his grip-sack and umbrella. He had been far from the scene of the accident, and did not even know there had been one. He stood amazed at Josephine's piercing cry; at Richards' quick motion to screen him from the view of his wife.
- 16 But Richards was too late.
- 17 When the doctors came they said she had died of heart disease—of joy that kills.

## Sample Questions for Inner/Outer Circle TEST

Before Papa's death, there are hints about what might happen to him and why. Quote two sections of the book which foreshadow Papa's death, including page numbers. Use evidence from each section--and from the final chapter, when Haven actually dies--to explain how the foreshadowing prepares us and Robert for his death.

Consider the numerous "circle of life" events which occur in *A Day No Pigs Would Die*. What purpose was the author trying to achieve by including so MANY different examples of death in this novel? Do his examples of life balance out the examples of death? Why or why not? Use at least five different "circle of life" events to support your response. (theme)

Describe the women in *A Day No Pigs Would Die*. Explain what you think their strengths and weaknesses are, and use evidence from the novel to support your response. Tell whether or not you think Robert speaks from an anti-female bias, and use evidence to show how you know. (characterization)

There are many times in this novel when Robert misunderstands a simple comment or phrase from another character. Write a characterization of Robert, and use three of these misunderstandings as PART of your evidence. What do we learn about him from these misunderstandings? What do we learn by watching him misunderstand?

React to the following statement: "*A Day No Pigs Would Die* is not just a book about the Shaker experience. It is a book that has lessons for all teenagers." Explain at least two lessons that teenagers can learn from the novel, and use evidence from the novel to support your response. (theme)

I give these sample questions to my students a few days prior to the circle test. We discuss them and students use them to create their own questions. We talk about using literary terms (underlined or in parentheses above) and sticking with Level 2 and Level 3 questions.

### Preparations for the Circle Discussion Include:

- Practice Discussions (with no grade)
  - Levels of Questions
  - Small Group Discussions
  - Motif/Chapter Groups
  - Passages for Annotation
- Students find the passages.  
Students complete the annotations.  
Students present annotations to class and lead a discussion.

Students must anticipate what might happen in the circle discussion— possible questions, apt passages to answers those questions, important quotes, ideas for themes.

I have printed class lists and written titles for the columns, as if I'm recording so many grades.

FOR STUDENTS IN THE INNER CIRCLE...

DAY ONE 4/7 <i>The Pearl</i>	speaks w/evidence	quotes aptly and concisely	logically settles debate		NEGATIVE?	One specific comment per student
Crabapple, Edna						
Flanders, Tod						
Freeloader, Freida						
Grasshopper, Graham						
Lionheart, Lisa						
Quimby, Mayor						
Simpson, Bart						
Squirrel, Joe						

FOR STUDENTS IN THE OUTER CIRCLE...

DAY TWO 4/8 <i>The Pearl</i>	asks a question	Level Two	Level Three		NEGATIVE?	Record question here.
Crabapple, Edna						
Flanders, Tod						
Freeloader, Freida						
Grasshopper, Graham						
Lionheart, Lisa						
Quimby, Mayor						
Simpson, Bart						
Squirrel, Joe						

I have also printed seating charts and recorded students' names, remembering the same basic order of the columns and recording slash marks on the students' boxes in the seating chart.

# "ETHICS IN MEDICINE"

from a site created by the University of Washington School of Medicine

Opportunities to "consent" a patient abound on the wards. The aim of this section is to provide you with the tools required for the "basic minimum" as well as providing a more complete picture of the ideal informed consent process. You will find that the particular circumstances (e.g. the patient's needs or the procedure) will determine whether a basic or complete informed consent process is necessary. (See also [Informed Consent in the OR.](#))

## **What is informed consent?**

Informed consent is the process by which a fully informed patient can participate in choices about her health care. It originates from the legal and ethical right the patient has to direct what happens to her body and from the ethical duty of the physician to involve the patient in her health care.

## **What are the elements of full informed consent?**

The most important goal of informed consent is that the patient have an opportunity to be an informed participant in his health care decisions. It is generally accepted that complete informed consent includes a discussion of the following elements:

- the nature of the decision/procedure
- reasonable alternatives to the proposed intervention
- the relevant risks, benefits, and uncertainties related to each alternative
- assessment of patient understanding
- the acceptance of the intervention by the patient

In order for the patient's consent to be valid, he must be considered competent to make the decision at hand and his consent must be voluntary. It is easy for coercive situations to arise in medicine. Patients often feel powerless and vulnerable. To encourage voluntariness, the physician can make clear to the patient that he is participating in a decision, not merely signing a form. With this understanding, the informed consent process should be seen as an invitation to him to participate in his health care decisions. The physician is also generally obligated to provide a recommendation and share her reasoning process with the patient. Comprehension on the part of the patient is equally as important as the information provided. Consequently, the discussion should be carried on in layperson's terms and the patient's understanding should be assessed along the way.

Basic consent entails letting the patient know what you would like to do and asking them if that will be all right. Basic consent is appropriate, for example, when drawing blood. Decisions that merit this sort of basic informed consent process require a low-level of patient involvement because there is a high-level of community consensus.

## How much information is considered "adequate"?

How do you know when you have said enough about a certain decision? Most of the literature and law in this area suggest one of three approaches:

- ***reasonable physician standard:*** *what would a typical physician say about this intervention?* This standard allows the physician to determine what information is appropriate to disclose. However, it is probably not enough, since most research in this area shows that the typical physician tells the patient very little. This standard is also generally considered inconsistent with the goals of informed consent as the focus is on the physician rather than on what the patient needs to know.
- ***reasonable patient standard:*** *what would the average patient need to know in order to be an informed participant in the decision?* This standard focuses on considering what a patient would need to know in order to understand the decision at hand.
- ***subjective standard:*** *what would this patient need to know and understand in order to make an informed decision?* This standard is the most challenging to incorporate into practice, since it requires tailoring information to each patient.

Most states have legislation or legal cases that determine the required standard for informed consent. In the state of Washington, we use the "reasonable patient standard." The best approach to the question of how much information is enough is one that meets both your professional obligation to provide the best care and respects the patient as a person with the right to a voice in health care decisions.

## Questions for Socratic Seminar over "Flowers for Algernon"

### **OPENING QUESTION**

1. From the companion article, define "informed consent."

### **CORE QUESTIONS**

2. According to the article, what two conditions must exist for the patient's consent to be valid?
2. How could we determine a patient's competence?
3. What are some possible coercive situations?
4. Charlie consented to the surgical procedure the doctors performed on him. Use evidence from the story to show whether Charlie was competent to give that consent.
5. What evidence can you find in the story to support this statement?  
Charlie was coerced into having the surgery,  
so his consent was not voluntary.

### **CLOSING QUESTION**

6. Was Charlie capable of giving informed consent before the surgery was performed?

**4th hour** \_\_\_\_\_

***Walk Two Moons, et al* Circle Discussion**

**5/13** *Stargirl*

**Q's** \_\_\_\_\_/10

**disc.** \_\_\_\_\_/40

**5/14** *Wrinkle*

**Q's** \_\_\_\_\_/10

**disc.** \_\_\_\_\_/40

COMMENTS SPECIFIC TO 4th HOUR:

Day 1: WOW! You guys have really figured out how to do this. Excellent work. What I realized as you discussed: *Stargirl* is all about change: Leo TRIES to change *Stargirl* and it's a disaster. *Stargirl* is trying to change anyone, but she changes many of them for the better. What lesson does that teach us?

When Sarah referred to page 128, I realized that Leo is in his own denial. I hoped someone else would make that connection to Sal during the discussion...but alas...

Thank you Carissa! Being an outcast is not a matter of degree (how bad it is). It's about perspective (others choose to cast someone out).

Alicia was right about *Walk Two Moons* and Mrs. Winterbottom's kiss. We assume, because of the set up, that it's going to be a sloppy, wet, make-out kind of kiss, but when we look at the EVIDENCE, we see that it was a simple "kiss on the cheek."

Day 2: I brought up all of my comments for this day at the end of the discussion... except for this one: Make more connections from one novel to another.

Great job. I'm really proud of all that you have learned this year.

COMMENTS FOR ALL MY CLASSES:

When you discuss literature in the future, please remember that no matter how brilliant your answer to a level 3 question, it will always be better with evidence from the text.

**TOTAL:** \_\_\_\_\_/100

***The House on Mango Street***  
**Circle Discussion**

**Day 1 10/4**

**Day 2 10/5**

Day 1      \_\_\_\_\_/10 questions      \_\_\_\_\_/40 discussion

Day 2      \_\_\_\_\_/10 questions      \_\_\_\_\_/40 discussion

TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_ / 100      (comments on back)

If you were absent or unprepared on the day of the discussion, you either wrote answers on paper or will write answers on paper. Those scores will be added later.

GENERIC NOTES for the whole class:

**5<sup>th</sup> hour:** Our parents ARE our ancestors.

I like the idea that neglect leads to a fall from grace.

Do not ask questions in a certain order.

I never thought before that there's a part of the book when "everything starts to go bad" or "starts to go downhill."

Someone said Esperanza is NEUTRAL toward her house. I don't believe this and wanted evidence to prove it. Esperanza is not happy about living on Mango Street. She doesn't decide to come back until "Alicia and I Talking on Edna's Steps."

Why is "A House of My Own" a juvenile idea?

The Cinderella allusion is important. I'm glad you spent a little time on it. Side note: In fairy tales, why is it so often a woman who brings the evil? Is it? The mother has usually died and is replaced by some animal or fairy or other creature to be the nurturing influence. Another woman is an evil influence, and the fathers are nincompoops at best, abusive at worst. Men are in some way absent until they swoop in at the end to rescue the damsel in distress.

If there are comments above that you agree with, why didn't you speak up during the discussion?