

American Born Chinese

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**After Reading Discussion Strategy:
Socratic Seminar (Modified)**

Context:

This after reading strategy can begin during the reading of the novel but never actually completed or done until the novel is finished. In this strategy, ninth-grade students will ask and answer any final questions they may have about the graphic novel and summarize ideas taught in past lessons. However, since this is a modified version of Dr. Wing's Socratic Seminar taken from Dr. Grierson's 2011 modified version, this lesson should not be used a final assessment with this construction or be regarded as this unit's final assessment, which is what a real Socratic Seminar from Dr. Wing would do.

Purpose:

The main purpose of this strategy is to act as a summative assessment to students learning and allow students to engage in classroom discussion about the graphic novel once they have all finished the novel. Although it would be easy to have an informal classroom discussion about what students liked or disliked about the novel, students should be given a formal approach to discussing the novel in order to fully flush out ideas or perspectives gained while reading the text. This will help emphasize particular ideas learned from reading the novel, practice strategies taught in previous activities or lessons, and engage in a final exploration of student built ideas about the graphic novel.

Materials Needed:

- Students' questions that they bring to class
- (Optional) Student self-evaluation sheet

Time Allotted:

60-90 minutes

Steps:

1. A couple days before beginning the seminar, have students think and write down a question they have about the novel that they would like to discuss with the other students in the classroom. The question prepared by the student should be an interrogative question, a question that asks about the reasoning behind the novel's choices and may have no right or wrong answer, or a predictive question, a question that asks others to make connections within the novel and another text or knowledge base. Here are examples of each question:

American Born Chinese Socratic Seminar

- **Interrogative**
Why did the character _____ do ... ?
Why do you think ... ?
What is the relationship between ... ?
 - **Predictive**
What is your opinion on ... ?
How could you explain ... ?
Why did the author ... ?
2. On the day of the seminar, arrange the room in a circle or to the point that most optimizes whole classroom discussion among the students. You want to create an environment that will allow for the ease in seeing who is talking and being able to hear what they are talking about.
 3. Begin the discussion by having one of the students read their question and having the other students answer the question with one of the four types of comments. If you think there needs to a form of assessment, you can have students keep track of the kinds of comments they make and turn in a form or worksheet that reflects such a system.
 - **Analysis**
Look at the text and add an original thought to an analysis of the text. Use the text to build on the original idea.
 - **Text**
Reference a specific example from the text that either supports or disclaims the question being discussed.
 - **Connection**
Bring in another source outside of the text into the discussion. This can be a text to text, text to self, or text to world connection.
 - **Reference**
Process what other people have to say and build off of their question with a challenge or a progression of the original idea.
 4. Once students have exhausted a particular question or you think it is okay to move onto the next, have the next student ask their question to the group and begin the discussion again. Try to make your involvement as minimal as possible. Only add your voice to keep students on track or progress the discussion towards a new question.
 5. Continue the debate until every student has been given a chance to participate or every question has been asked. End the discussion with either a final wrap up question or by summarizing everything that was discussed by the end of the period.

Assessment:

The assessment should come from observing the classroom discussion and taking note when students ask a question or when they comment on what other students discuss. Also, make sure to pay attention to what they say and if it adds meaning to the discussion. If there needs to be another form of assessment, then you can have students fill out some form of self-assessment as suggested in the previous section.