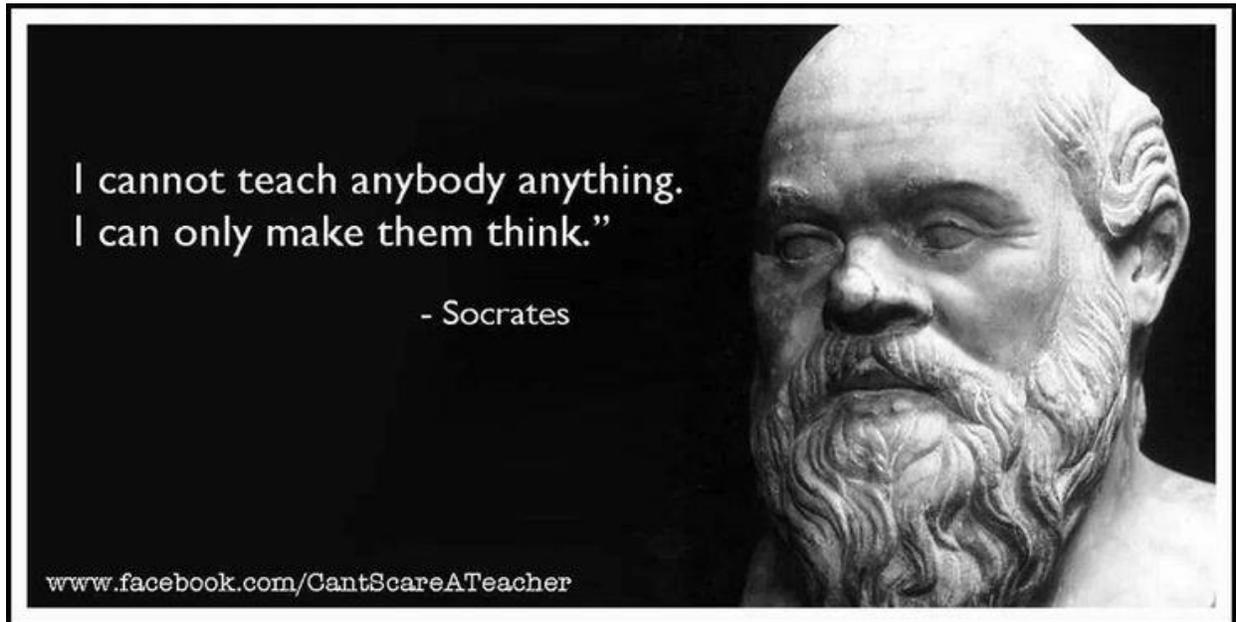


The Socratic Method



The Socratic Method is often used to promote critical thinking. It focuses on providing more questions than answers to students and fosters inquiring into subjects. Ideally, the answers to questions are not a stopping point for thought but are instead a beginning to further analysis and research. Faculty should craft questions before class to present during their time with students. Faculty should require students to consider how they rationalize and respond about topics, thus teaching them to process information. Additionally, the Socratic Method should promote collaboration and open-mindedness, not debate.



Quick Tips for using the Socratic method

1. Students need to come to class prepared to discuss. This means they will need to put effort into becoming familiar with the material enough to contribute. You may want to guide their preparation with a pre-class assignment.
2. As you craft questions for your class, remember to let the discussion lead the way through the material. Your questions are a guide, teaching points you'll want to hit during your class, but they are not set in stone. This will give you the flexibility to provide a student-centered learning environment.
3. Make sure your questions are open-ended enough to promote inquiry. Good questions guide students to explore different perspectives. This method should help students gain perspective and explore multiple perspectives and viewpoints from their classmates. Each question should lead to a discussion, rather than one answer. It may be necessary to have follow-up questions prepared, in case discussion needs to be prompted.
4. Rationalize! Work through ideas and different answers. The moments spent rationalizing incorrect theories often produce more learning than simply stating facts. You are guiding students thought process, teaching them to think about the material, not simply teaching them the material.
5. Take notes on the discussion to use for review or quizzes/exams. Discussion will make it easier for students to retrieve information later, because they will have memory cues from what was said. You can help them make these connections when you review with them from notes on what they discussed. (or have students act as record keeper during the discussion, trading off each class)
6. A good sign that you are successfully implementing this method is when students are openly contributing to the discussion, freely asking questions or ideas without prompting, and especially if they admit errors in their understanding. These are signs that you have created a safe place for open expression.

Learn more

The Socratic Seminar: <https://youtu.be/RBjZ-4MK1WE>

How to Bring Socratic Seminar to the Classroom: <https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/bring-socratic-seminars-to-the-classroom>

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