

Socratic Seminar

Dialogue, not Debate

Dialogue	Debate
Collaborative: multiple sides work toward shared understanding.	Oppositional: two opposing sides try to prove each other wrong.
Participants listen to understand , to make meaning , and to find common ground .	Participants listen to find flaws , to spot differences , and to counter arguments .
Enlarges and possibly changes a participant's point of view.	Affirms a participant's point of view.
Creates an open-minded attitude: an openness to being wrong and an openness to change.	Creates a close-minded attitude , a determination to be right
One submits one's best thinking, expecting the other people's reflections will help thinking rather than threaten it.	One submits one's best thinking and defends it against challenge to show that it is right
Temporarily suspending one's beliefs.	Investing wholeheartedly in one's beliefs.
Search for strengths in all positions .	Search for weaknesses in the other position .
Respects all the other participants and seeks not to alienate or offend.	Rebuts contrary positions and may belittle or deprecate other participants.
Assumes that many people have pieces of answers and that cooperation can lead to a greater understanding .	Assumes a single right answer that somebody already has.