

Title:

TreeTender Socratic Seminar

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Abstract:

In the film Tree Tender, Gaia learns about the importance of the Tree of Life to represent the ancestry and relationships between all life that ever existed. In better understanding these relationships, we can better assess where our attention must be directed to slow the loss of biodiversity caused by humans. Student will write their own open-ended, thought-provoking questions to facilitate discussion, taking turns to ask their questions and discuss and debate in a courteous manner. When discussing, students should use information and examples from the film, other classes or lessons, and current events to strengthen their claim. This uses pedagogy like Open-Ended Instruction, Experiential Learning, and Co-operative Learning to discuss ecological concepts like the Anthropocene Extinction and biodiversity loss, natural history, the use of the Tree of Life, and ecosystem services we rely on.

Learning objectives:

At the end of this Socratic Seminar, students will be able to:

- Create and ask thought-provoking questions to facilitate further discussion
- Answer questions using previous lessons, current events, and individual thought
- Connect moments and themes from the film to daily life and societal issues
- Improve critical thinking, speaking, and debate skills

Timeframe:

Instructor preparation should take about 30 minutes. Watching Tree Tender takes about 15 minutes. Socratic Seminar should take the entire class period, and may be extended a second class period, if desired.

List of materials:

Supplemental Socratic Seminar Instructions for Teachers

Supplemental Socratic Seminar Instructions for Students

Desks arranged in circle (or outdoor seating area)

Procedure and general instructions (for instructor). REQUIRED.

- Begin by asking students to review the events of the film.
- The day before the Socratic Circle, instruct students to create three well-written, thought provoking questions for use in the discussion (see teacher page for examples).
- On the day of the Socratic Circle, arrange seating area into a circle, if possible, to allow students to better connect and discuss.

- Open the floor up to students asking their own questions first, asking for a volunteer to begin the questions.
- Allow the students the freedom to debate and discuss the questions for a few minutes, only stepping in if the discussion gets heated.
- As one question winds down and there is silence in the room, have students step in and ask their questions at will.
 - You may also individually choose students to ask their question if no one is voluntarily stepping in, especially students who have been quieter and have not participated.
- Make sure all students in the class participate at least three times.

Procedure and general instructions (for students).

After watching Tree Tender, write three thought-provoking questions that can be discussed at length. The next class meeting, sit in a circle with your classmates. One student in the class will begin the discussion by asking one of their questions. You do not need to raise your hand to participate in the discussion, but jump in with your thoughts in turn and politely. Make sure you are paying attention, using examples from the film as well as from current events and other classes, and that you are courteous when agreeing or disagreeing with your fellow classmates. When there is another moment of silence, any other student may jump in and ask their question. All students must participate at least three times to receive participation credit.

Reference

Tree Tender. (2017). Retrieved May 9, 2018, from <https://www.treetender.org>