

### 3. Paideia Seminar

Time: 50-90 minutes

#### Introduction

A Paideia Seminar is a collaborative, intellectual dialogue about a text, facilitated with open-ended question. The main purpose of the seminar is to arrive at a fuller understanding of the ideas and values in *Dream of a Nation*, of ourselves, and of each other. The Paideia Seminar puts the teacher in a position not to teach, but to simply moderate. By prompting open-ended questions to engage students and closing conversations by asking students to apply information and personalize ideas, the class will gain a better understanding of the information as a whole.

The following lesson is adapted from the original Paideia Seminar from the National Paideia Center. For further classroom instruction models and to learn more about Paideia Active Learning visit [www.paideia.org](http://www.paideia.org).

#### Procedure

Students will all be assigned to read one from *Dream of a Nation*; prompt students to read the essay, take notes and write down any questions they have, this can be done in-class or as an at home assignment. After the essay is read, the teacher will assemble the students in a whole class discussion (preferably in a large circle).

During the discussion the **teacher-moderator** will:

1. Ask challenging open-ended questions based on main ideas from the text.
2. Take a variety of notes to record the flow of ideas.
3. Move the discussion along by asking follow-up questions.
4. Note each student's level of participation and his or her contribution to the dialogue.

During the discussion the **students** will:

1. Focus on the ideas and values embedded in the essay.
2. Use other students' names if referring to a point he or she made.
3. Stay focused on the main speaker and wait their turn to talk.
4. Agree or disagree in a courteous thoughtful manner.

#### Follow-Up Activity

After the seminar thank the students for their participation. Engage the class in a short review/critique of the discussion. Ask them what worked? What didn't work? And how can the class improve for the next time?

After the review/critique, assign the students a short writing assignment where they can either:

- Reflect on the group discussion or their individual performance
- Explain a comment they did not get a chance to discuss
- Further reflect on the content discussed