

## Socratic Seminar Student Learning Plan – REBECCA KEEZEL

### **Context**

Overview: Currently, within the Middle East, differences in religion, culture, policy, and geography have caused many violent outbreaks to take place. The reasons behind these conflicts are many and complex, and are hard to generalize into a short summary. This conflict is important for students and others to understand because in the new global economy, other nations actions and conflicts will in defiantly effect our own. In order to allow students to begin to grapple with such a topic and responsibility, they will participate in a socratic seminar that analyses and orally discusses primary sources (blogs) from both Israel and the Gaza Strip. Students will look for similarities, differences, striking passages, and question their own beliefs concerning the conflict within this seminar. Teacher should ask guiding and focusing questions in order to help students participate and reach these objectives.

Title: Discussing the Palestine-Israeli conflict: Two worlds, same fears

Grade/Class: 10<sup>th</sup> grade World Geography

Length: 30 minute mini lesson

Topic: Understanding the current divisive events in Gaza and Israel using Socratic Seminar Method

Background Information: SOL STANDARD WG.4 (North Africa and Southwest Asia [Middle East]), case study (*see Picasestudy attachment*)

Rationale: In order to approach a topic as complex as the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, students should have the opportunity to openly discuss, question, and debate the history, and current events taking place. This conflict will probably have effects on their own futures, regardless of the physical distance between the United States and the Middle East. Students will accomplish this by participating in a 30 minute socratic seminar., including a 20 minute discussion portion. The seminar will provide a safe and exploratory environment and method that will help guide students analyze the text, and form a deeper understanding about the topic. An intervention for a targeted SPED student is also included in this lesson due to the lesson's such high social interaction and discussion of current events/cultural response. The targeted student's intervention hopes to allow the student social interaction in which they can learn about American culture, behavior, and language without explicitly being called out or isolated in his studies.

**Instructional Model:**

The socratic seminar is a teaching method that can be used in social studies classrooms. This method's key components include text, classroom environment, and questions. A socratic seminar can promote deeper understandings of texts. It can also introduce and generate many new ideas amongst and between many different people. The socratic seminar allows students an opportunity to practice oral discussion and articulation of their personal opinions. This method allows students to cover SOL content and skills in a unique social setting.

The socratic seminar method is appropriate for talking about the Palestine-Israel conflict because it is a delicate and complex one that can not be boiled down into 3 pages of textbook. Students are curious about the issue and have every right to be, seeing that this conflict will probably have effects on their own futures, regardless of the physical distance between the United States and the Middle East. The socratic seminar provides a safe exploratory learning environment that allows students the opportunity to openly discuss, question, and debate the history, and current events taking place concerning a topic as complex as the Palestinian-Israel conflict.

Within this environment it is necessary for students to see sources from both sides of the conflict (a Palestinian and a Israeli) in order for them to have an equal view of the argument and decide their own opinions from a balanced foundational base of information. The text provides this equal information access because it is a primary source on a reading level that 10<sup>th</sup> graders can understand, presented in a popular format with high schoolers (blogs), presents two different sources, views, etc, yet with similarities in emotion and hopes/fears.

**Objectives:** Are both academic and intellectual objectives clear? Are objectives appropriate for course, students, and curriculum? What should students learn and apply from the seminar? From the text? Are they written as student outcomes? Are objectives clearly linked to VA SOLs and NCSS Standards?

## LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. (SOL STANDARD WG.3C)
  - a. essential understandings
    - cultural difference and similarities can link or divide regions
  - b. essential knowledge
    - religion as a divisive force: Jews, Christians, and Muslims all claiming Jerusalem as their religious heritage site.
  - c. essential skills
    - explain cause and effect relationships
    - compare and contrast differing sets of ideas, beliefs, and behaviors
    - draw conclusions and make inferences about data
2. Students will be able to identify cause and effect relationships, involved within the current Israel - Gaza conflict, by accurately completing *conflict guide* worksheet which is collected and graded by the teacher.
3. Students will be able to orally discuss an assigned text and topic in a class wide discussion for 20 minutes, observed and recorded by the teacher

## INTERVENTION OBJECTIVE

4. Student will be able to orally state at least one comment about the assigned topic within a 30 minutes class wide seminar, observed and recorded by teacher.

**\*\*academic – OBJ 1, 2 intellectual 3, (4)**

## Assessment:

1. Class participation; each student must make at least one comment within 30 minute Seminar activity. Teacher uses attendance as a checklist for students that reach this requirement, and do not; teacher also takes written notes concerning student answers, response to activity, and anything else that could be helpful in better understanding each student's learning process. (OBJ 1c, 3, [4])
2. In order to identify and understand complex religious divisions in the terms of World Geography SOLS, students will complete worksheet *conflict guide*, which is collected and graded for accurate completion by the teacher. (see *conflict guide for key*) (OBJ 1, 2)
3. Intervention notes will include a checklist (did student talk with other students or to teacher?), and written observational notes that cover the students reaction/behavior before activity, and then after activity. (OBJ 4)

Feedback: Students will receive a copy of my notes on their personal contributions and grade/other comments when graded *conflict guide* is returned to the students the next class.

**\*\*content – ASSESS 2; discussion 1, (3)**

**Content and Instructional Strategies:** Are all elements of Socratic Seminar included and described in detail?

Seminar Text: see attached *PI.doc*

Why is this text worthy of a seminar – Primary source on a reading level that 10<sup>th</sup> graders can understand, presented in a popular format with high schoolers (blogs), presents two different sources, views, etc, yet with similarities in emotion and hopes/fears. In a conflict such as the Palestine-Israeli one, regardless of where an individual's logic and information leads them, it is important to remember that both sides are effecting human life in a violent way. More importantly, it is necessary for students to see sources from both sides of the conflict (a Palestinian and a Israeli) in order for them to have an equal view of the argument and decide their own opinions from a balanced foundational base of information.

Opening Question: “So did you find anything similar or different about these accounts?”

Core Questions: “Where specifically (what words/phrases/etc) do you see similarities and differences? (ask students to use numbered sentences on *PI.doc* to reply)”

“what are the authors purpose or perspectives?, what is/are some striking or interesting phrases?”

Potential Follow-up Questions (generic or specific to text): how does this relate to us personally?, do you feel like you understand the text /content at a deeper level?

Preparation for Seminar (seminar text)

- case study worksheet (*see attached Picasestudy*), which is a reading comprehension worksheet that helps student when reading about the history of the Palestine Israel conflict in their text; assigned as homework the previous class.
- each student must make at least one comment within 30 minute Seminar activity. Teacher uses attendance as a checklist for students that reach this requirement, and do not

Room Arrangement: Move regular rows into a circle

*10 MINUTES*

Preparation for Seminar (discussion skills)

1. open powerpoint ([https://docs.google.com/a/email.wm.edu/presentation/d/1SoScr0h3FRw9\\_olqj1t2Qx6X6s9BS4dz7BQz\\_PMfPuY/present#slide=id.p](https://docs.google.com/a/email.wm.edu/presentation/d/1SoScr0h3FRw9_olqj1t2Qx6X6s9BS4dz7BQz_PMfPuY/present#slide=id.p)); handout *conflict guide*
2. move through powerpoint, point out and allowing students time to use this resource to complete their conflict guide.
3. Explain to students that they will soon be moving their chairs into a circle and participating in a socratic seminar activity in which they were able to discuss topics at their own pace and without the teacher directly involved. Say, for an example, “basically, 3 of you and your friends are hungry for pizza, but can not agree as to which pizza you want. You guys sit down and discuss, question, and debate with each other over pizza size, shape, and the toppings until finally, you reached a consensus. We're gonna do this as a class, except with a topic much more complex than pizza. Together, as a class, you will discuss what you find striking, compare/contrast, or perplexing about the assigned texts.”
4. Wait for a few seconds to see if students remember your earlier reference to moving into a circle; if students do not remember remind them.
5. Hand out *PI.doc*
6. Explain that students will be speaking about what they read next on *PI.doc*
7. Allow students to volunteer and read the *PI.doc* out loud to the class.

20 MINUTES

Procedures for the seminar

- 8,. Explain that now is the time to discuss this topic. Point out these rules and procedures: *must speak once at a time, and try not to speak over each other; students do not need to raise their hand or direct their dialogue to the teacher only. EVERY STUDENT MUST SAY AT LEAST ONE COMMENT TO PASS. IF YOU DO NOT CONTRIBUTE YOU FAIL THIS ASSIGNMENT.*
9. Begin the seminar by asking the question “So did you find anything similar or different about these accounts?” Teacher should start observing and recording notes concerning student participation and the targeted student's intervention.
10. Allow students to discuss the text in any way they want (appropriate/productive). Some guiding questions to ask in case students stray off topic : what are the authors purpose or perspectives?, what is/are some striking or interesting phrases?

Post-Seminar and Debrief

11. Ask students some final big end questions such as : how does this relate to us personally?, do you feel like you understand the text /content at a deeper level? In order to debrief and apply the practically and relevancy of discussing such a topic.
12. When these questions are answered, in the allotted time, collect *conflict guide* and move the desks from a circle back to classroom rows.

## Resources

**MATERIALS NEEDED : computer, Powerpoint, handouts, internet connection, smart/white board, rubrics and checklists**

*students: writing tool*

### ATTACHED WORKSHEETS :

*PI.doc*

*PI conflict guide* ---- (with key in red)

*PIcasestudy*

### REFERENCES

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RussiaToday (Nov 18, 2012). *Video: Massive explosion as Israel airstrikes Gaza* Retrieved Nov 21, 2012 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQipiEH9MvM>

## **Differentiation**

Yes. This plan includes different activities such as reading, analyzing, debate, discussion, social interaction, standing up and geometrically aligning classroom desks into a circle/back out again, as well as your typical fill in the blank worksheet reinforcer. The students' highest weighted grade for this part of the lesson, the socratic seminar (30 minute mini lesson), is merely a completion grade; students must make one comment out loud about the topic in order to pass. As long as students make one relevant comment, regardless of content specificity, pace, vocabulary, cultural trains of thought, disability, etc.etc.etc.. they receive full credit on their participation grade. This allows people of all sorts of intelligences and skills an opportunity to get a fair grade and share their different views/culture/ways of thinking/etc which is the core of my aim of differentiating in all plans and overall curriculum.

## **Adaptations**

Yes.

- Targeted student for SPED research based intervention would unknowingly participate in an attempt to address academic and cultural concerns through observation of willing vocal communication in a forced communicative situation, a socratic seminar. This would provide an opportunity for the targeted student to socially interact with the other students of the class whether the other students would normally speak to him or not. I also hoped that the topic, Israeli-Palestine conflict, was foreign enough to both the targeted student and the other students that their understandings would be at an more equal playing field. Teacher takes observation and notes.
- The other students with IEPS in this particular class concern exam/test taking. Because there will be no formal exams or tests in this lesson, the accommodations do not apply.

## **Reflection**

I have thought through this delicate topic, and have written down some responses to questions that I believe may be asked. I plan to stay on topic. I have met and reviewed the plan with my CT. I am still worried about the small amount of time available, as well as the delicate and complex nature of the subject. If students dominate the seminar, I have guiding questions; my CT can step in if it gets catastrophic. Students are graded for participation, if they do not orally state one opinion, remark, statement, etc concerning the topic in this time period they will not pass the assessment of the socratic seminar assignment.

## **Post-teaching –**

This less did not go over quite as well as the other before it. Students were super chatty/hyper, and I was very tired and nervous. Their enthusiasm of the relevance/practicality of the topic and large amount of questions caught me completely off guard. ( I must now remember to plan for this in any class more carefully. ) I skipped some portions of the method in order to make up for time. Working with the new Promethean board added confusion. I had practiced before hand, but apparently not enough. I brought my seminar questions and observation sheets with me when I went to lead the class, but not my whole lesson

plan; this was a mistake. Must practice pacing/breathe and Promethean board. Need to learn/observe ways to calm down an over excited class.

**\*\*\*next Socratic seminar have more definite rules, portrayed more defiantly to the class!!**

- M = Missing
- I = Inadequate
- A = Adequate
- E = Exemplary



## Gaza Strip

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## Israel

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\_\_\_\_\_ - Arabic acronym for the Islamic Resistance Movement, a Palestinian Islamic fundamentalist organization that was founded in 1987 during the Intifada; it seeks to establish an Islamic state in Israel, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip (the former mandate of Palestine). An offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood, this group operates mosques, schools, clinics, and social programs but is best known in the West for its military wing, which has carried out numerous terrorist attacks on Israelis.

\_\_\_\_\_ Israel blocks trade to Gaza Strip from all touching borders, water, and air.

\_\_\_\_\_ Hamas becomes majority political leadership; fighting begins

\_\_\_\_\_ attempted cease fire; fails

\_\_\_\_\_ fighting returns; death toll rises above 100

\_\_\_\_\_ newly drafted cease fire agreement takes hold; fighting stops

# Israel and Gaza violence: Voices from across the divide

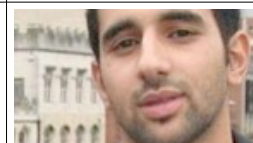
The Israeli military and militants in Gaza are continuing to trade fire, with the round of violence that has followed Israel's killing of Hamas's military chief showing no sign of abating. Here people from Gaza and Israel share their experiences.

## Motaseem Dalloul : Gaza City, Gaza, 17:40GMT



- 1 There has been a period of calm in Gaza City, but a few hours earlier there were many explosions in several areas.
- 2 The last explosion in my area hit a four-story residential building that was nearly empty but there were still a few people there.
- 3 My own house was partially damaged yesterday. All the windows and doors were blown out. So I've left and taken my family to stay with relatives. But nowhere feels safe.
- 4 Yesterday everyone went to bed early because there was no electricity. Many areas are without power still, from what I've heard on local radio.
- 5 No-one has spoken about food shortages but I have seen long queues of people waiting to pick up bread.
- 6 People aren't going to work because of the atmosphere of war. Some fear an Israeli ground operation.

## Hen Kinan : Beersheba, Israel, 16:40GMT



- 7 Things haven't changed - there are still a lot of missiles coming into this area. I've counted at least nine salvos since about seven in the morning. And each time the alarm goes off its not just one missile but several.
- 8 There is still no routine here - no-one is going to work. My university has closed. I've been told it will only start again when the operation is over.
- 9 We're not going out of the house - we're staying in the basement. My parents are only leaving the home for basic things like shopping.
- 10 I haven't been out of the house for days. The last time I was out the air raid siren caught me whilst I was driving and I had to stop the car and grab some cover - it wasn't a pleasant situation.
- 11 My brother has two small children - they panic every time the air raid sirens go off.
- 12 I don't know how long this situation will go on for. I don't want to see civilians killed on either side but I support the fight against Hamas as a terror organization.