



Paideia Seminar Lesson Plan



Text:

12 Paideia Principles

Grade/Subject

MS or HS / ELA



Ideas, Values:

Education, Schooling, Learning, Teaching



Pre-Seminar Content



Launch Activity:

Divide students in to teams of 4-5 and ask them to remember a time when they learned something that has become of lasting value to them. After each student shares, have them list the characteristics that their learning experiences have in common (it was challenging, etc.). Share the characteristics with the whole group and list those traits of valuable learning on the board for future reference.



Inspectional Read:

Distribute the text and have participants number the principles 1-12 for ready reference during the seminar. Read independently or by the teacher aloud to students. Have students underline key words or phrases that are unclear, unfamiliar or confusing.

Background Information:

Share as appropriate: The original Paideia Group consisted of influential scholars and educators led by Mortimer Adler who banded together in the early 1980s to address what they considered to be a crisis in American public education. “The 12 Paideia Principles” is a simple condensation of the program that they outlined in three books: *The Paideia Proposal* (1982), *Paideia Problems and Possibilities* (1983) and *The Paideia Program* (1984).

Vocabulary:

Students will identify unfamiliar words/terms during the *Inspectional Read*. Have those words listed on the board and work through their understanding of these words in context.

Analytical Read:

Have students read the text once more with a partner, taking turns reading each principle slowly and aloud. Then have all students reread silently and annotate their copies of the text by marking with an exclamation point 2-3 principles with which they agree; and with a question mark one principle about which they have questions.



Pre-Seminar Process

-  Define and state purpose for Paideia Seminar.
-  Describe the responsibilities of facilitator and participants.
-  Have participants set a Personal Goal.
-  Agree on a Group Goal.

Seminar Questions

Opening (Identify main ideas from the text.):

- ❖ Which of these 12 principles do you consider the most important? (Vote by show of hands).
- ❖ Why did you choose that principle as the most important? (Spontaneous discussion.)

Core (Analyze textual details.):

- ❖ What synonym(s) can we use in the place of the word “principle”?
- ❖ Which single word in the text best supports the overall meaning of these principles? Why that word?
- ❖ Which principles on the list do you disagree with or have questions about? Explain.
- ❖ How are two or more principles related? Note which principles and explain how they are related or connected.
- ❖ In principle #7, it refers to teachers coaching the skills of learning. Based on the text, what are the “skills of learning”?

Closing (Personalize and apply the ideas.):

- ❖ Refer to principle #2, “That, therefore, they [students] deserve the same quality of schooling, not just the same quantity.” What role do you play in determining the “quality” of schooling you receive?

Post-Seminar Process



Have participants do a written self-assessment of their personal participation goal.

 Do a group assessment of the social and intellectual goals of seminar.

 Note reminders for next seminar.



Post-Seminar Content

 *Transition to Writing:*

Brainstorm key words students now associate with the words “education” and “quality.” Have a volunteer write those words on the board and discuss how they are related.

 *Writing Task:*

After reading and discussing “12 Paideia Principles”, write a letter to a teacher in which you define and explain one of the following terms: *quality schooling, genuine learning, skills of learning or cooperatively engaged* and explain how that affects you as a student. Support your written explanation with quotes from the text.

(LDC Task#: 12)

 *Brainstorm:*

Return to the list of words, etc. generated in the *Transition to Writing* stage. Have all students use a marker or piece of chalk to highlight ideas on the board generated in the *Launch* as characteristics of valued learning; or add to the material on the board ideas that will help them respond to the *Writing Task*. Stress that the students are writing an actual letter to an actual teacher.

 *Structure the Writing:*

Review the format of a letter for this post seminar writing artifact.

 *First Draft:*

Challenge all to draft their letters by describing one of the quotes from the “12 Paideia Principles” in detail. Refer to the original text in order to illustrate key points.

 *Collaborative Revision:*

Have participants work in pairs (according to which phrase they chose to define) to read their first drafts aloud to each other with emphasis on reader as creator and editor. Listener says back one point heard clearly and asks one question for clarification. Switch roles. Give time for full revisions resulting in a second draft.

 *Edit:*

Once the second draft is complete, have participants work in groups of three-four and this time take turns reading each other’s second drafts slowly and silently, marking any spelling or grammar errors they find. (Have dictionaries and grammar handbooks available for reference.) Take this opportunity to clarify/reteach any specific grammar strategies you have identified your students needing. Give time for full revisions resulting in a third and final draft.

 *Publish:*

Have students deliver the letters to the teachers to whom they were addressed. Have teachers respond to each individual letter and discuss the whole experience with the class—focusing on how they might together transform the teaching and learning in the class.

This Paideia Lesson Plan was created by:

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The 12 Paideia Principles

We believe...

- that all children can learn;
- that, therefore, they all deserve the same quality of schooling, not just the same quantity;
- that the quality of schooling to which they are entitled is what the wisest parents would wish for their own children, the best education for the best being the best education for all;
- that schooling at its best is preparation for becoming generally educated in the course of a whole lifetime, and that schools should be judged on how well they provide such preparation;
- that the three callings for which schooling should prepare all Americans are, (a) to earn a decent livelihood, (b) to be a good citizen of the nation and the world, and (c) to make a good life for oneself;
- that the primary cause of genuine learning is the activity of the learner's own mind, sometimes with the help of a teacher functioning as a secondary and cooperative cause;
- that the three types of teaching that should occur in our schools are didactic teaching of subject matter, coaching that produces the skills of learning, and Socratic questioning in seminar discussion;
- that the results of these three types of teaching should be (a) the acquisition of organized knowledge, (b) the formation of habits of skill in the use of language and mathematics, and (c) the growth of the mind's understanding of basic ideas and issues;
- that each student's achievement of these results should be evaluated in terms of that student's competencies and not solely related to the achievements of other students;
- that the principal of the school should never be a mere administrator, but always a leading teacher who should be cooperatively engaged with the school's teaching staff in planning, reforming, and reorganizing the school as an educational community;
- that the principal and faculty of a school should themselves be actively engaged in learning;
- that the desire to continue their own learning should be the prime motivation of those who dedicate their lives to the profession of teaching.

—*The Paideia Council*