

Module 5.1

Why Evidence Matters

From Text to Talk to Argument

Pages 135–153

Estimated Time: 1 Hour, 15 Minutes



Prior to Meeting

- Have participants read pages 135 to 153, stopping at the section titled “Problem- and Project-Based Learning: *Using Evidence.*”
- Remind participants of their assignment from Chapter 4, Module 2.
- Ask participants to focus on a case-study student similar to Dana (described on page 151). This student might exhibit one or more of the following characteristics:
 - Low self-efficacy (our belief in our ability to succeed in certain situations) regarding literacy tasks
 - Discomfort with speaking out in class
 - Difficulty with comprehension
 - Low self-confidence when interacting with peers
- Find the website www.paideia.org and post the website address for participants’ use.

Materials You Need for This Module

- PowerPoint slides for Chapter 5, Module 1
- Copies of Standards for Motivation and Engagement
- Copies of **Handouts 5.1 and 5.2**
- Internet access, if available

Segment One: Introduction (Approximately 20 Minutes)

1. Project the first two slides to introduce this module.
2. Project **PowerPoint Slide 3** and remind participants that the module focuses on these characteristics of a college- and career-ready student.

3. Have participants turn and talk to a partner:
 - This characterization describes three ways that students should interact with evidence: “cite evidence,” “use evidence,” and “evaluate others’ use of evidence.” Which of these three skills do you think your case-study student will find most difficult and which skill will be easier? How can you use your student’s strengths to address his or her challenges in this area?
4. Arrange participants in groups of 4 and ask them to take turns sharing the artifacts they brought from the lesson on close reading from Chapter 4, Module 2.
5. Wander from group to group, listening in and making comments as appropriate.
6. If time permits, ask volunteers to share with the entire group anything especially interesting or informative about their lessons.

Segment Two: Exploring Seminars (Approximately 15 Minutes)

1. Place participants in small groups. Ask them to discuss the Paideia Seminar described in their reading by addressing the questions in **PowerPoint Slide 4**.
2. Allow each group to share major talking points.
3. Provide **Handout 5.1** and ask participants to check off characteristics that their case-study student (or any student) might exhibit during a discussion or seminar with the entire class.
4. Ask participants how Ms. Hedt and Ms. Swartzlander helped Dana (pages 152–153) become more confident in her reading, speaking, and listening skills.
5. Ask teachers what they might do to help their own case-study student participate in a discussion or seminar.

Segment Three: Creating a Seminar (Approximately 30 Minutes)

1. Place participants in disciplinary or grade-level groups.
2. Ask participants to think about a topic or unit they often teach and a related text that might be appropriate as a seminar text. Encourage them to go online to find a text if they don’t have one in mind. Remind them that texts can be poems, short stories, essays, articles, photographs, art, song lyrics, primary documents, speeches, diagrams, charts, court decisions and more.
3. Project **PowerPoint Slide 5**.
4. Pass out **Handout 5.2** and ask participants to discuss how they might organize a seminar around a particular text.
5. Allow each group to share their text and ideas regarding how they would create a seminar.

Segment Four: Seminars in the Classroom (Approximately 5 Minutes)

1. Project **PowerPoint Slide 6**.
2. Ask participants to attempt some sort of seminar with their students in the classroom before the next session. Encourage them to work with another teacher in the planning or implementation if possible.
3. Suggest that participants connect to the Paideia website, www.paideia.org and use the resources on the site to conduct a classic Paideia Seminar.

Segment Five: Respond in Your Learning Log (Approximately 5 Minutes)

1. Project **PowerPoint Slide 7** and read it aloud.
2. Ask participants to respond to the slide in their learning logs.

Handout 5.1 **Characteristics of First-Time or Struggling Seminar Participants**

Roberts and Billings in their book *Teaching Critical Thinking: Using Seminars for 21st Century Literacy* (2012) argue that “speaking and listening (like reading and writing) are not a function of personality but rather learned skills that must be taught in school” (p. 29). They provide a list of characteristics, summarized below, that are often evident when students (or adults) first engage in a seminar or are struggling participants.

- A few participants dominate the conversation while others sit passively and observe, listen, or tune out.
- Participants don’t make eye contact with the person who is speaking.
- Participants engage in side conversations.
- Participants miss key aspects, either in the text or when someone is making a point.
- Participants speak so softly they are unable to be heard.
- Participants make unrelated or repetitive points.
- Participants stick to a single perspective even when multiple perspectives are offered.
- Participants don’t ask questions or build on the comments of others.

Source: Roberts, T., & Billings, L. (2011). *Teaching critical thinking: Using seminars for 21st century literacy*. Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.

Retrieved from the companion website for *Common Core CPR: What About the Adolescents Who Struggle . . . or Just Don't Care?* by ReLeah Cossett Lent and Barry Gilmore. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, www.corwin.com. Reproduction authorized only for the local school site or nonprofit organization that has purchased this book.

Handout 5.2 **Planning a Seminar**

Preseminar

1. Build background for the text.
2. You may choose to give the text to students prior to the seminar, especially if it is complex.
3. Create or review ground rules for discussion.

Sample Ground Rules

- Only one person may speak at a time.
 - It is not necessary to raise your hand; simply wait until someone has finished speaking before you begin speaking.
 - Speak at least three times, but don't dominate.
 - Listen closely to all comments.
 - Make notes of your own thoughts and others' comments.
 - Ask questions.
 - Be respectful when commenting or responding to someone, even if you disagree.
 - Refer to the text when you speak.
 - Keep an open mind.
4. Go over your role as a facilitator and point out how a seminar is an opportunity for an exchange of ideas instead of a debate where one person or side "wins" an argument.

During Seminar

1. Arrange chairs or desks in a circle. You sit in a desk within the circle.
2. Be prepared to take notes in order to keep up with who has spoken and what has been said.
3. Have students read the text silently first.
4. Ask a student to read the text aloud or read it aloud yourself.
5. Identify main ideas from the text by first asking each student to respond to the same question, such as "What title would you give this text?" or "What is the most important word or idea in the text?"
6. Ask open-ended questions that you prepared in advance. Such questions should move participants into the text, perhaps eliciting multiple perspectives.
7. Don't necessarily stick to your script of questions. You may want to change questions based on responses of the students.
8. As necessary, remind students of the ground rules.

Postseminar

1. Thank students for their participation, focusing on positive comments or aspects of their behavior.
2. Ask students to reflect on their participation in writing, perhaps using the ground rules as a sort of rubric.
3. Create an assignment (such as a collaborative project, performance, or writing) related to the text.