**How to Use the Socratic Method in the Distance-Learning Environment**

**Role of the Teacher, Facilitator, Coach, or Judge Leading the Socratic Exploration**

During Socratic questioning, the teacher is a model of critical thinking who respects students' viewpoints, explores their understanding, and shows genuine interest in their thought processes. The teacher creates and sustains an intellectually stimulating environment and acknowledges the value of every opinion. In an intellectually open, safe, and curiosity-promoting learning environment, students are challenged, yet comfortable in answering questions in front of their peers.

**Tips for Using the Socratic Method**

1. Draw in as many students as possible. In a distance-learning environment, invite students to use the chat box. Occasionally, read selected questions/comments to the group.
2. Keep the discussion focused by asking questions that give structure and direction to the exploration.
3. Use brief, open-ended questions to promote critical thinking and encourage discussion.
4. Wait Time: Be comfortable with silence. Wait at least 5 to 10 seconds for students to respond.
5. Follow up on students' responses and invite elaboration. Develop what they say into teachable moments.
6. Interject hypotheticals into the follow-up questions (What if …) to bring in different perspectives.
7. Periodically summarize what has been discussed.
8. In the distance-learning environment, ask students to respond in the chat box or use the raised hand function if they disagree with your periodic summaries.
9. Encourage students to disagree with the summary statements, using a friendly tone and questions to draw out counter arguments.
10. Encourage student to drill down into the issues by asking questions that go deeper.

Adapted from the [Science Education Resource Center](https://serc.carleton.edu/introgeo/aboutus.html) at Carleton College. [How to Use the Socratic Method in the Classroom.](https://serc.carleton.edu/introgeo/socratic/fourth.html)