

# Socratic Method for Channeling Discussion in On-Line Classes

**Douglas Hoffman**

**B.A., M.S., M.B.A., ASQ-CSQE, ASQ-  
CQMgr, ASQ Fellow**

**Software Quality Methods, LLC, (SQM)**

# Dangers in Leading Discussions

- Cutting off critical thinking
- Providing the one “right” answer
- Stifling expression of students’ opinions
- Removing opportunity for debate
- Reducing the learning about writing
- Limiting discussion to one person’s experience

# Socratic Method

- Asking and answering questions
- Stimulates critical thinking
- Method of hypothesis elimination
- Use questions to expose errors in reasoning or beliefs
- Accept any well reasoned answer
- Expect challenges to instructor's points [and accept well-reasoned ones]

# What To Do

- Show your presence
- Ask leading questions
- Reflect on students' statements
- Prompt further discussion when the point hasn't been reached
- Keep it short and simple
- Let students speak
- Add value
- Ask why
- Include some context
- Keep it professional
- Respond sooner (rather than later)
- Think before you write
- Give examples from your experience
- Avoid adverbs
- Support radical ideas that may have merit

# What To Avoid

- Directly answering the lead question
- Being too harsh
- Firing off a message without rereading it for tone
- Embarrassing or demeaning students
- Over-responding
- Preaching (lecturing)
- Jumping in too soon
- Sidetracking the discussion
- Dominating the discussion

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