The Socratic method was derived from the Greek philosopher, Socrates. In order to delve into his students’ view, he would ask them questions until any contradictions were exposed. Socrates also used this method of questioning to encourage people to question the things they were told and to look beyond the obvious.

Lectures have their place in the world of education. We've all been in classes where the teacher did most of the talking. Sometimes this is a helpful way of taking in the information. Even watching video lessons is a little like listening to a lecture. The conversation is a one-way street, where you're listening and learning, and until you take the quiz, you don't necessarily get a chance to chime in with your own thoughts and knowledge.

The Socratic method is a different style of education than a lecture because it relies on dialogue or Dialectic between teacher and student. This approach involves a conversation in which a student is asked to question their assumptions. It is a forum for open-ended inquiry, one in which both student and teacher can use probing questions to develop a deeper understanding of the topic.

Today, the Socratic method is often used in medical and legal education in order to help students tap into more difficult concepts and/or principles. Under the Socratic method, there are various ways that professors can question their students. Typically, however, the questioning usually lies at opposite ends of a spectrum. These a few basic identification questions to begin the inquiry: the parties, the facts of the case, the issues, the procedural posture, the decision and the reasoning for this decision.

Video on Socratic Method

Exercise (Part 1 of 2)

1) Knowledge is belief
   Is my belief in pink flying elephants a form of knowledge?
   Notice this question shows the original definition isn’t sufficient. New definition:
   Knowledge is true belief. * Repeat step 1-3. Even if we don’t come to a perfect definition,
   we know what knowledge isn’t. That is, it’s not just ‘belief’ or ‘true belief.’

2) Knowledge is holding a true belief

3) A fish is an animal that swims

4) Justice is saving the maximum number of lives
Be a Socratic thinker

The aim of teaching critical thinking is to help students show their intellectual courage when needed

Recently, both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal made references to the focus on critical thinking in the National Education Policy 2020. It is stated that “education must develop students’ cognitive capacities such as critical thinking and problem solving”. The critical thinking is “one of the fundamental principles that will guide both the education system at large, as well as the individual institutions within it.

Critical thinking is not a new concept. ‘Socratic questioning’ or the ‘Socratic teaching’ technique is considered the foundation of critical thinking. A Socratic teacher does not believe in spoon-feeding or providing answers, but is trained to ask questions and make students think. In India too, some great teachers have practised it for centuries.

A simple definition of critical thinking is “Critical thinking is that mode of thinking — about any subject, content, or problem — in which the thinker improves the quality of his or her thinking by skilfully taking charge of the structures inherent in thinking and imposing intellectual standards upon them.” The characteristics of good critical thinkers include open-mindedness, inquisitiveness, objectivity, analytical reasoning, awareness of logical fallacies, ability to identify biases, willingness to raise vital questions, desire to change the status quo, intellectual courage, and intellectual humility.

Critical thinking skills are vital for reformation and social change. What happens when teachers and students become good critical thinkers? They become informed citizens, start looking at things critically, question the status quo, and dissent. Critical thinking and dissent go together.
Why Use the Socratic Method?

There are 3 main reasons the Socratic method is still used today.

- It helps develop critical thinking skills.
- It gets students ready to think quickly.
- It forces students to be prepared and attentive.

The Socratic method leads to critical thinking skills by showing students how to identify the weak points in an argument. Once they can identify what makes an argument weak, they can then strategize the argument at a higher level. By teaching students to respond to questions quickly, it prepares them for a judge’s rapid-fire questioning. Being forced to always be prepared and attentive teaches students accountability.

Furthermore, the Socratic method of teaching is useful for students who plan on working in areas of law that require more “on-your-feet” thinking. Two such examples include litigation and negotiation. The Socratic method is also used to help arouse curiosity in students. By making them think in different ways about various subjects, it encourages them to wonder how things could be different. Additionally, it takes learning from a passive experience to a participatory experience.

Pros and Cons

Advantages of the Socratic method include:

- Gaining active learning and listening skills
- Promotion of critical thinking skills
- Learning how to be challenged and what to do when challenged
- Discovering how to examine issues in-depth

Disadvantages of the Socratic method include:

- Easy failure rate without student participation
- A fear of public speaking is common
- Loss of interest possible when a professor is speaking with an individual student
- It’s sometimes difficult to handle the multiple responses for a given question
Quick Tips for Using the Socratic Method:

1. As students you need to come to class prepared to discuss. This means they will need to put effort into becoming familiar with the material enough to contribute.
2. The discussions must lead the way through the material. Your questions are a guide, teaching points you’ll want to hit during your class, but they are not set in stone. This will give you the flexibility to provide a student-centred learning environment.
3. The questions must be open-ended in order to promote inquiry. Good questions guide to explore different perspectives and this method helps student gain perspective and explore multiple perspectives and viewpoints from their classmates. Each question should lead to a discussion, rather than one answer. It may be necessary to have follow-up questions prepared, in case discussion needs to be prompted.
4. Take notes on the discussion to use for review or quizzes/exams. Discussion will make it easier to retrieve information later, because they will have memory cues from what was said.
5. A good sign that you are successfully implementing this method is when you are openly contributing to the discussion, freely asking questions and sharing ideas.

To conclude - Remember that providing a wrong answer is better than no answer at all. Your professor will likely lead you along the right course of thinking. After all, the intention of the Socratic method is to help students gain critical thinking skills.

The Socratic Method is often used to promote critical thinking. It focuses on providing more questions than answers to students and fosters inquiring into subjects. Ideally, the answers to questions are not a stopping point for thought but are instead a beginning to further analysis and research.

There’s no doubt that it’s beneficial for those looking to pursue a career as a lawyer to familiarize themselves with the Socratic method. It’s one of the best ways to start preparing for law school and the legal profession, regardless of whether you plan to be a courtroom litigator or a legal researcher.
Resources:
1. Article on Socratic Method of Teaching
2. Article on What is Socratic Method
3. Video on Critical Thinking
4. 5 Tips to Improve Your Critical Thinking

“I cannot teach anybody anything. I can only make them think.” – Socrates

Update on Skill Development & Training

Skill Development Programs (sponsored by Capgemini and MSDF)
The Campus to Corporate ‘Skills Training Program’, supported by Capgemini currently had 1353 2nd year students in the Aptitude program with 496 students mapped to FFE’s training partner Ethnus, and 857 students with Focus Academy for Career Enhancement (FACE). The students completed the program on 15th July.

Out of the current 3rd-year scholars supported by MSDF (1257), 720 students have enrolled in the Coursera program. Additionally, 1189 students are going through Mock Interviews with Ethnus.

4200 scholars moving to the 2nd, 3rd and 4th year completed the AMCAT test in June/July 2021

QMed Program - 66 Medical Scholars have enrolled for the Medical Literature searching program from June 20th.

FLY - FFE has launched the FLY (Finding the Leader in you) program for FFE Scholars from May 2021. FFE joined hands with CMI (Competitiveness Mindset Institute Inc) to conduct the FLY program as a full-fledged course trying to cover 1000 students this year from the 1st and 2nd year of study. This is a 12 days program covering 5 pillars of the competitiveness Mindset. (Currently, the 7th batch is going on).

* Conscientiousness
* Taking Initiative
* Perseverance
* Innovativeness
* Problem Solving.
SRIP - 11 3rd year FFE scholars completed the online Summer Research Internship Program on 25th July 2021.

Medical Webinar -
The 11th Medical Webinar was conducted on 31st July 2021 on the topic "Liver Cirrhosis - causes, diagnosis and treatment" by Dr. Sheetal Mahajani. There were around 225 participants.

Cognizant Impact Hiring – 13 graduates of the 2020 cohort are currently in the hiring process

Placement update

- In the current graduating Cohort (2019-20), 948/1023 students (92.5%) are employed (718 secured jobs and 230 opting for higher studies) and 75/1023 are seeking employment (7.5%).
- In the 2020-21 graduating cohort (current final year), 703/890(79%) have gained jobs (499 have secured jobs and 204 are opting for higher studies) and 187/890 are seeking employment (21%).
- Companies like Geberit, Capgemini, O9 Solutions, Thomson Reuters Trane Technologies have shown interest to offer Placement opportunities for 2020 and 2021 graduating cohorts.

Below are toppers in the Coursera training program. They have been issued with gift vouchers, based on their performance. Congratulations to all of you!

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<tr>
<th>Toppers in the Coursera Program (July)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sathyashree N</td>
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<td>Karthikeyan K</td>
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<tr>
<td>Koonreddy Kotesh Reddy</td>
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<td>Sandhiya R</td>
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<td>Sk Riaz</td>
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Stay Connected: Social media is a great forum to stay connected and updated about our latest events, news and opportunities - Follow us on LinkedIn and Facebook. We urge each of you to connect with us. This is also a great networking platform to interact with the Alumni.

Send us your feedback and suggestion at studentrelations@ffe.org