Sleep: Let’s Talk!  
(Hosting a Socratic Conversation about Sleep)  
Activity 6A

**Activity Objectives:**
Using current articles about issues related to sleep, students will be able to:
- Discuss topics presented in the articles.
- Participate in a Socratic Conversation.
- Support and/or question ideas and opinions presented by other participants.
- Synthesize ideas presented into deeper understanding of sleep topics.
- Provide evidence for ideas/opinions expressed during discussion.

**Activity Introduction:**
An excellent way to help students clarify their opinions and to gain insight into the ideas and/or opinions of others is to host a Socratic-style conversation. The issue of sleep in our modern society offers many interesting topics for such discussion. Use the suggested references for the basis of your discussion or others you might have at your disposal and *Let’s Talk!*

**Activity Background Information:**
The term *Socratic* is derived from Socrates, a Greek philosopher known for his *Theory of Knowledge*, which promotes learning through a structured conversation called dialectic. *Dialectic* is a way to look at ideas or opinions logically through question and answer. Socrates used this process to draw out opinions of every participant in the discussion. By correcting misconceptions or incomplete ideas, and helping to identify contradictions, Socrates believed he could facilitate deeper understanding in each participant.

This technique is interesting in that participants gain a full understanding of a selected topic without memorizing information. It is also a social activity, which has appeal to students. *Readings* for a Socratic Conversation should be identified for their wealth of interesting ideas, issues and values. *Topics* can be taken from any discipline and should raise questions with many possible answers. The goal of a Socratic Conversation is for participants to raise questions that further their understanding of the topic.
Opening the Socratic Conversation involves asking a question – this can be done by the leader or by one of the participants. It should reflect real curiosity and takes participants to the readings selected for the discussion. The leader is both a participant and leader, asking more questions as the discussion develops to keep the thought process going. It is a spontaneous process, which emphasizes the importance of each participant and contributes to the fun. The participants are responsible for the quality of the discussion by studying the readings, listening, responding, and supporting others.

Some basic guidelines for a Socratic Conversation include:
- Using the readings during the discussion – this is not a memory test!
- Allowing participants to “pass” during the discussion
- Expectation that participants prepare ahead of time
- Asking for clarification if needed during the conversation
- Making notes about points you want to discuss later
- Talking to each other, not just one or two people or the leader
- Citing evidence for statements
- Awareness that dialogue is collaborative, unlike debate, which is oppositional

Suggested Readings:
The background information on Sleep will vary depending upon the specific topic being discussed. Resources that might be used include:
- Time Magazine www.time.com

Cover for December 20, 2004 The New Science of Sleep
Stories:
- Why We Sleep (You may think it’s for your body, But it’s really for your brain)
  By Christine Gorman
- Sleep is for Sissies
  By Walter Kirn
- Adventures in the Sleep Lab (apnea)
  By Andrew Sullivan

Newsweek Magazine
- Struck by hunger in the middle of the night
  (Dr. says Night Eating (NES) is depression-related not an eating disorder)

   NBC Dateline July 9, 2006
Activity Materials:
- 1 Copy of each article used in the Socratic Conversation

Activity Instructions:
For general information about hosting a Socratic Conversation, see the slideshow on the Teacher Enrichment Initiatives website in the Teacher Resources section. The URL is http://teachhealthk-12.uthscsa.edu/teacherresources.htm.

Activity Management Suggestions:
In this activity, resources are provided for those who have never hosted a Socratic Conversation; however, the best way to learn is to participate in actual discussions to get the feel for the process.

Modifications:
Allow students needing assistance to go over the text readings in advance and allow them to use highlighted articles so they can find important points easily.

Extensions:
Ask students to research new articles that could be used in a Socratic Conversation.

References Used:
Socratic Seminar Skills

Facilitating Thoughtful Dialogue
http://www.greece.k12.ny.us/instruction/ela/SocraticSeminars/facilitatingthoughtfuldialogue.htm

Avid Socratic Seminar
http://www.maxlow.net/avid/socsem/socraticseminars.html

Socratic Dialogue
http://www.journeytoexcellence.org/practice/instruction/theories/miscideas/socratic/
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Activity “Administrivia”:

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Relevant TEKS:

6th Grade ELA

6.2 (B,E) Reading/Vocabulary Development. Students understand new vocabulary and use it when reading and writing. Students are expected to:
   (B) use context (e.g., cause and effect or compare and contrast organizational text structures) to determine or clarify the meaning of unfamiliar or multiple meaning words;
   (E) use a dictionary, a glossary, or a thesaurus (printed or electronic) to determine the meanings, syllabication, pronunciations, alternate word choices, and parts of speech of words.

6.12(B) Reading/Comprehension of Informational Text/Procedural Texts. Students understand how to glean and use information in procedural texts and documents. Students are expected to:
   (B) interpret factual, quantitative, or technical information presented in maps, charts, illustrations, graphs, timelines, tables, and diagrams.

6.13(A,B,C) Reading/Media Literacy. Students use comprehension skills to analyze how words, images, graphics, and sounds work together in various forms to impact meaning. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater depth in increasingly more complex texts. Students are expected to:
   (A) explain messages conveyed in various forms of media;
   (B) recognize how various techniques influence viewers’ emotions;
   (C) critique persuasive techniques (e.g., testimonials, bandwagon appeal) used in media messages;

6.19(A,B,C) Oral and Written Conventions/Conventions. Students understand the function of and use the conventions of academic language when speaking and writing. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to:
   (A) use and understand the function of the following parts of speech in the context of reading, writing, and speaking: (i) verbs (irregular verbs and active and passive voice); (ii) non-count nouns (e.g., rice, paper); (iii) predicate adjectives (She is intelligent) and their comparative and superlative forms (e.g., many, more, most); (iv) conjunctive adverbs (e.g., consequently, furthermore, indeed); (v) prepositions and prepositional phrases to convey location, time, direction, or to provide details; (vi) indefinite pronouns (e.g., all, both, nothing, anything); (vii) subordinating conjunctions (e.g., while, because, although, if); and (viii) transitional words and phrases that demonstrate an understanding of the function of the transition related to the organization of the writing (e.g., on the contrary, in addition to);
   (B) differentiate between the active and passive voice and know how to use them both; and
   (C) use complete simple and compound sentences with correct subject-verb agreement.

6.22(B) Research/Research Plan. Students ask open-ended research questions and develop a plan for answering them. Students are expected to:
   (B) generate a research plan for gathering relevant information about the major research question.

6.23(A,B,C,D,E) Research/Gathering Sources. Students determine, locate, and explore the full range of relevant sources addressing a research question and systematically record the information they gather. Students are expected to:
   (A) follow the research plan to collect data from a range of print and electronic resources (e.g., reference texts, periodicals, web pages, online sources) and data from experts;
   (B) differentiate between primary and secondary sources;
   (C) record data, utilizing available technology (e.g., word processors) in order to see the relationships between ideas, and convert graphic/visual data (e.g., charts, diagrams, timelines) into written notes;
   (D) identify the source of notes (e.g., author, title, page number) and record bibliographic information concerning those sources according to a standard format; and
   (E) differentiate between paraphrasing and plagiarism and identify the importance of citing valid and reliable sources.

6.25(A) Research/Organizing and Presenting Ideas. Students organize and present their ideas and information according to the purpose of the research and their audience. Students are expected to synthesize the research into a written or an oral presentation that:
   (A) compiles important information from multiple sources;

6.26(A,B,C) Listening and Speaking/Listening. Students will use comprehension skills to listen attentively to others in formal and informal settings. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to:
   (A) listen to and interpret a speaker’s messages (both verbal and nonverbal) and ask questions to clarify the speaker’s purpose and perspective;
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(B) follow and give oral instructions that include multiple action steps; and
(C) paraphrase the major ideas and supporting evidence in formal and informal presentations.

6.27 Listening and Speaking/Speaking. Students speak clearly and to the point, using the conventions of language. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to give an organized presentation with a specific point of view, employing eye contact, speaking rate, volume, enunciation, natural gestures, and conventions of language to communicate ideas effectively.

6.28 Listening and Speaking/Teamwork. Students work productively with others in teams. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to participate in student-led discussions by eliciting and considering suggestions from other group members and by identifying points of agreement and disagreement.

7th Grade ELA TEKS

7.13 (A,B,C) Reading/Media Literacy. Students use comprehension skills to analyze how words, images, graphics, and sounds work together in various forms to impact meaning. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater depth in increasingly more complex texts. Students are expected to:
(A) interpret both explicit and implicit messages in various forms of media;
(B) interpret how visual and sound techniques (e.g., special effects, camera angles, lighting, music) influence the message;
(C) evaluate various ways media influences and informs audiences;

7.19 (A,C) Oral and Written Conventions/Conventions. Students understand the function of and use the conventions of academic language when speaking and writing. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to:
(A) identify, use, and understand the function of the following parts of speech in the context of reading, writing, and speaking: (i) verbs (perfect and progressive tenses) and participles; (ii) appositive phrases; (iii) adverbial and adjectival phrases and clauses; (iv) conjunctive adverbs (e.g., consequently, furthermore, indeed); (v) prepositions and prepositional phrases and their influence on subject-verb agreement; (vi) relative pronouns (e.g., whose, that, which); (vii) subordinating conjunctions (e.g., because, since); and (viii) transitions for sentence to sentence or paragraph to paragraph coherence
(C) use a variety of complete sentences (e.g., simple, compound, complex) that include properly placed modifiers, correctly identified antecedents, parallel structures, and consistent tenses.

7.22(B) Research/Research Plan. Students ask open-ended research questions and develop a plan for answering them. Students are expected to:
(B) apply steps for obtaining and evaluating information from a wide variety of sources and create a written plan after preliminary research in reference works and additional text searches.

7.23(A,B,C,D) Research/Gathering Sources. Students determine, locate, and explore the full range of relevant sources addressing a research question and systematically record the information they gather. Students are expected to:
(A) follow the research plan to gather information from a range of relevant print and electronic sources using advanced search strategies;
(B) categorize information thematically in order to see the larger constructs inherent in the information;
(C) record bibliographic information (e.g., author, title, page number) for all notes and sources according to a standard format; and
(D) differentiate between paraphrasing and plagiarism and identify the importance of citing valid and reliable sources.

7.25(A,B) Research/Organizing and Presenting Ideas. Students organize and present their ideas and information according to the purpose of the research and their audience. Students are expected to synthesize the research into a written or an oral presentation that:
(A) draws conclusions and summarizes or paraphrases the findings in a systematic way;
(B) marshals evidence to explain the topic and gives relevant reasons for conclusions;
7.26(A,B,C) Listening and Speaking/Listening. Students will use comprehension skills to listen attentively to others in formal and informal settings. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to:
(A) listen to and interpret a speaker’s purpose by explaining the content, evaluating the delivery of the presentation, and asking questions or making comments about the evidence that supports a speaker’s claims;
(B) follow and give complex oral instructions to perform specific tasks, answer questions, or solve problems; and
(C) draw conclusions about the speaker’s message by considering verbal communication (e.g., word choice, tone) and nonverbal cues (e.g., posture, gestures, facial expressions).

7.27 Listening and Speaking/Speaking. Students speak clearly and to the point, using the conventions of language. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to present a critique of a literary work, film, or dramatic production, employing eye contact, speaking rate, volume, enunciation, a variety of natural gestures, and conventions of language to communicate ideas effectively.

7.28 Listening and Speaking/Teamwork. Students work productively with others in teams. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to participate productively in discussions, plan agendas with clear goals and deadlines, set time limits for speakers, take notes, and vote on key issues.

8th Grade ELA TEKS
8.13(A) Reading/Media Literacy. Students use comprehension skills to analyze how words, images, graphics, and sounds work together in various forms to impact meaning. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater depth in increasingly more complex texts. Students are expected to:
   (A) evaluate the role of media in focusing attention on events and informing opinion on issues;

8.22(A) Research/Research Plan. Students ask open-ended research questions and develop a plan for answering them. Students are expected to:
   (B) apply steps for obtaining and evaluating information from a wide variety of sources and create a written plan after preliminary research in reference works and additional text searches.

8.23(A,B,C,E) Research/Gathering Sources. Students determine, locate, and explore the full range of relevant sources addressing a research question and systematically record the information they gather. Students are expected to:
   (A) follow the research plan to gather information from a range of relevant print and electronic sources using advanced search strategies;
   (B) categorize information thematically in order to see the larger constructs inherent in the information;
   (C) record bibliographic information (e.g., author, title, page number) for all notes and sources according to a standard format; and
   (D) differentiate between paraphrasing and plagiarism and identify the importance of using valid and reliable sources.

8.25 Research/Organizing and Presenting Ideas. Students organize and present their ideas and information according to the purpose of the research and their audience. Students are expected to synthesize the research into a written or an oral presentation that:
   (A) draws conclusions and summarizes or paraphrases the findings in a systematic way;
   (B) marshals evidence to explain the topic and gives relevant reasons for conclusions;
   (C) presents the findings in a meaningful format;

8.26(A,B,C) Listening and Speaking/Listening. Students will use comprehension skills to listen attentively to others in formal and informal settings. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to:
   (A) listen to and interpret a speaker’s purpose by explaining the content, evaluating the delivery of the presentation, and asking questions or making comments about the evidence that supports a speaker’s claims;
   (B) follow and give complex oral instructions to perform specific tasks, answer questions, or solve problems; and
   (C) summarize formal and informal presentations, distinguish between facts and opinions, and determine the effectiveness of rhetorical devices.

8.27 Listening and Speaking/Speaking. Students speak clearly and to the point, using the conventions of language. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to advocate a position using anecdotes, analogies, and/or illustrations, and use eye contact, speaking rate, volume, enunciation, a variety of natural gestures, and conventions of language to communicate ideas effectively.

8.28 Listening and Speaking/Teamwork. Students work productively with others in teams. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to participate productively in discussions, plan agendas with clear goals and deadlines, set time limits for speakers, take notes, and vote on key issues.