

Collège des Frères – Jerusalem
AGEH Association for Development Cooperation – Cologne

The Art of Debating A Participatory Approach to Debating in Schools

Ingeborg Tiemann

*Edited and Translated by
Ghadeer Elias Bishara*

Jerusalem 2013

The Art of Debating
A Participatory Approach
to Debating in Schools

Ingeborg Tiemann

Edited and Translated by
Ghadeer Elias Bishara

First Edition – 2013

Published by:
Al-Fayneeq Center for Educational Empowerment
Tel/Fax: +972 (0)2 5839455 – info@alfayneeq.org
Copyright © CDF



Latin Patriarchate Printing Press, Jerusalem
Beit Jala – 02 2760886 – lppress@latinpat.org

Supported by



Contents

FOREWORD	5
Foreword 1: Suleiman Rabadi, <i>Director of Collège des Frères – Jerusalem</i>	5
Foreword 2: Michael van Lay-Exeler, <i>Coordinator CPS of AGEH in Palestine and Israel</i>	7
Foreword 3: Ingeborg Tiemann, <i>Civil Peace Service Expert – AGEH Cologne / CDF – Jerusalem</i>	9
Debating in English Classes: Ghadeer Bishara, <i>Vice Director for Development and Public Relations and Head of the English Department, Collège des Frères – Jerusalem</i>	13
THE BASICS	15
Chapter One	
Introduction	15
Chapter Two	
Debate in a Nutshell – The Key Elements	23
– Basic Terms	23
– Basic Components of a Debate	24
– The A-R-E Model of Argumentation and the Structure of Counter Arguments	26
– Preparation for the Debate	27
– Phrase Samples for the Debate	28
– Topics for Debate	31
– Feedback for Debaters	33
– Judging Debates	35
– Script for Debate Moderators	37
FORMATS – METHODS – ACTIVITIES	39
Chapter One	
Debate Formats following the Participatory Approach	39
– Debate with an Empty Chair	39
– Debate Competition through Questioning	42
– American Debate	43
Chapter Two	
Methods and Activities	45
– (A) MODEL FOR IN-CLASS DEBATE SESSIONS	45
– Session 1: “The Basics of Debate”	45
– Session 2: “Building up Counter Arguments”	49
– (B) METHODS FOR FULL-CLASS INVOLVEMENT	53
– Town Meeting	53
– Expanding Debate	54
– Involve the Audience	55
– TV-Show: Meet Our Guest!	57
– Numbered Heads Together for Debate!	59

– (C) METHODS FOR DEBATE CLUBS	60
– Develop Together a Story	60
– “Yes, but” – Debate Game	62
– The Debate Hero	64
– Tossing the Ball	65
– Role Play Debate	67
– Mini Debate	68
– Feedback Methods for the End of Sessions	69
– (D) METHODS FOR YOUNGER KIDS	71
– Toss the Duck!	71
– Take a Stand!	72
– Ice Cream or Chocolate? Apple or Banana?	74
– I am Special!	76
– (E) TRAINING FOR CONSTRUCTING ARGUMENTS / COUNTER ARGUMENTS	79
– Preparing Arguments	79
– Complete the Argument! – The Model: A-R-E	81
– Strategies to Build up Arguments	82
– Strategies to Counter Arguments	83
– (F) METHODS FOR PREPARING DEBATES	85
– Interviews and Website Checking for Debate Preparation	85
– What Makes a Good Debater?	87
– Mind Maps as a Tool for Debate Preparation	89
– Drama Game for Debate Expressions	90
– A-R-E in Colour	91
– One Minute Speech	92
– Counter Argument Exercise	93
– Counter Ball – Evidence Ball – Impact Ball	94
– Combination of Written Exercises – Oral Debates	96
– Agree or Disagree!	98
– FREEZE! – Body Language in Debating	99
– Your Voice is Your Asset	101
WORKSHEETS	103
– Worksheet (1) – The Question Fan	103
– Worksheet (2) – The A-R-E Matrix	104
– Worksheet (3) – Building up your Arguments	105
– Worksheet (4) – Preparing my Argumentation	106
– Worksheet (5) – Counter Arguments – What Might the Others Say?	107
– Worksheet (6) – Debate Organizer: Reasons and Examples	108
– Worksheet (7) – Debate Organizer: The Arguments of Your Opponents	109
– Worksheet (8) – Feedback for Observation of Individual Students, Checklist	110
– Worksheet (9) – Judging a Debate	111
– Worksheet (10) – Debate Competition through Questioning	112
REFERENCES	115

FOREWORD

Foreword 1

Suleiman Rabadi

*Director of Collège des Frères
Jerusalem*

We, at Collège des Frères in Jerusalem, have been aspiring to provide our students with the best education possible. We, as an institution that has been functioning since 1876, carry with us a great tradition of Lasallian values of education that are based on three main Pillars “Faith, Fraternity and Service”.

Collège des Frères is keen at providing outstanding scientific, educational, spiritual and cultural programs and at the same time offer a variety of extracurricular activities that are designed to help develop the students’ personality, social capabilities and skills. The school’s policy aspires at nurturing creative and responsible individuals, armed with civilized human values based on freedom, love, tolerance, and respect for others.

The school has a long tradition of democratic values which exhibited itself, among other practices, of regular student elections of their representatives, Parents involvement in the educational process of their kids. The active involvement of teachers in different councils and committees has been instrumental in the development of the vision and programs of the school.

This tradition is mostly exhibited through the coexistence and respect among students that are from different religions or denominations, different social strata and different cultures and backgrounds. In this respect, the school has been a model for tolerance and acceptance of the “other”.

We believe, that an excellent education would empower students and enable them to face the challenges of the age we are living and to aspire to be creative and pioneers among their peers. Therefore it is an important educational goal to help our students build their tools of knowledge and knowledge especially in this age of information and technological revolutions.

Logical and critical thinking is at the core of the empowerment process, and Debating is a sharpening tool of these processes. Debating reinforces a number of issues:

1. The importance of knowing before arguing.
2. The importance of reflecting about what we argue about.
3. Difference in opinion is a normal phenomenon and that it should be respected.
4. The importance of taking a stand to defend our opinion.
5. To understand that critical thinking is an important tool of knowledge.

Debate would also develop the personality of students, develop their confidence in themselves and develop their leadership skills. It would provide the students with an important tool in this age. It would help them present themselves and their ideas – which is an important asset in their future studies and future work engagements –. It would teach them to respect each other and work in groups and to be tolerant of others if they differ with them.

Producing a manual to train students and Faculty to use this important empowering tool, builds on an already existing tradition and sharpens it to maximize the intellectual capabilities of students and Faculty.

I would like to thank Dr. Ingeborg, Dr. Michael van Lay from AGEH and the German government for its financial support, for this opportunity of cooperation and knowledge exchange that has been all through beneficial in building cultural ties and developing together the debate clubs in our school among other important activities pursued by Dr. Ingeborg, who has been a superb colleague that is living and practicing the vision of the Civil Peace Service that she represents. These programs that have been executed in the last three years have contributed to raising the awareness among our students and empowered them to reflect about the world they live in in a more positive sense in spite of occupation and oppression that the Palestinian people have been inflicted with.

I would like to thank our colleague Ghadeer Bishara for editing and translating this manual.

Foreword 2

Michael van Lay-Exeler
*Coordinator CPS of AGEH
 in Palestine and Israel*

This manual of DEBATING is a fruit of cooperation. For the past three years, Dr. Ingeborg Tiemann, being an experienced German scholar of comparative religious studies, a pedagogue and adult educator, has worked with teaching staff and administration of the Palestinian and Roman Catholic Collège des Frères Jerusalem (CDF – Jerusalem). Developing DEBATING has been part of her work.

Not that DEBATING wasn't already known in Palestine before European colonial intervention. Palestine is part of a larger cultural, political and economic region surrounding the Mediterranean basin since three thousand years. Ancient religious and wider cultural impulses of the East, including Jewish monotheism, have reacted with Greek and Roman cultures and brought about Christianity. They were altogether challenged by Islam, which wanted to restore the true Abrahamic belief in the one and only God. In these contexts, the art of civilized DEBATING was highly developed and has always been practiced!

When therefore Dr. Suleiman Rabadi as Director of CDF – Jerusalem suggested to systematically develop DEBATING at his school, Dr. Tiemann could happily go along. To assist in strengthening the democratic Palestinian identity is at the heart of the political program she is part of: the *Civil Peace Service (CPS)*. Within its framework, German civil society organizations, in this case the *Roman Catholic Association for Development Cooperation (AGEH)*, financed by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, cooperate with local organizations. DEBATING is, without any doubt, a core skill for handling conflicts in a humane way. By helping *schools becoming democratic enclaves*, DEBATING might contribute to a culture of just compromise that will lead to, one day, overcoming even the intractable Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

So, DEBATING is the right opposite to oppression (coming from “them” to “us”) and to submission (inflicted by ourselves upon ourselves), and also an alternative to fierce and bloody fighting.

DEBATING is rooted in *faith*: that you are standing on a solid rock, if you are guided by the urge and courage to follow the call of your conscience, by thinking the unconventional, by freedom of expression, by curiosity and openness towards the new and the unfamiliar. Life must not be strangled by the taboo “Dare not express openly what bothers you!” It must not reject the challenge of seemingly irreverent, strange, unusual questions and requests. It must not be ruled by fear and xenophobia (meaning literally the “fear of the other, the foreigner”).

Furthermore, social life is rooted in *hope*: human beings, even those appearing to be the most self-centered, blinded and deluded, are capable of learning about reality. One must not become exasperated with one’s adversary or enemy, one must not demonize or despise him and completely give up on him. One must not demean oneself by isolating, excommunicating, let alone annihilating the other. These would be – and sadly enough are – forms of desperate behavior.

All these musts and must-nots don’t exclude, though, *confronting your opponent!* They exclude exchanging physical blows, but replace them by the spiritual, mental power of true or at least persuasive arguments. It remains a veritable battle, even virtual “warfare”, but one that respects the dignity of your enemy (and your own!) and keeps him (and yourself!) alive and able to learn and adapt. It gives him – and you – a chance to change and find a way to survive and live together. By virtue of this, DEBATING is an expression of social, political *love*. However, quite tough love!

Foreword 3

Ingeborg Tiemann

Civil Peace Service Expert

AGEH – Cologne / CDF – Jerusalem

“Thursday at 3 pm, Debate Club for 7th and 8th Graders!” – This was the announcement for the first Debate Club at Collège des Frères / Beit Hanina in Fall Semester 2010. When I wrote this invitation together with my Palestinian colleague Mr. George Abu Said, I was highly skeptical whether any student might show up. At least there are other joyful opportunities to spend free time, like dabkeh dancing or playing the drums or just hanging around. I was surprised: 18 students came. The first session was probably a little bit noisy – everyone wanted to make his/her point preferably at full volume. It took us some time and efforts to make the students understand that Debating is not just throwing opinions against each other – that Debating is an artful way of expressing one’s point of view and listening to it. Till today, I am amazed by students who join the Debating: They show enthusiasm and they connect themselves to the Debate approach in a seemingly natural way.

The students of the Debate Clubs and Debate sessions at CDF – Jerusalem taught me some important things about Debating in the Arabic culture and language. Observing their enthusiasm for Debating I understood that these kids think and talk in narratives, which are deeply embedded in the texture of their life, their culture, one might also add: in the voices of the Arabic poetry. In Debates done by Palestinian kids there is no dearth of life experiences and its accompanying emotions. Debates in the Palestinian school context therefore might never lack the most tangible and often persuasive part of an argument: the immediate evidence that life examples provide. This adds not only considerable color to the Debates, it makes arguments potentially convincing and gives a boost to the excitement which vitalizes an audience and the Debaters themselves. My experience is: in teaching Palestinian students Debating we do not have to worry about the intensity and vibrancy of a Debate. This inherent enthusiasm in narrations provides a strong springboard

for learning the other necessary Debate skills: building up logical and precise arguments and counter arguments and listen to the opponents of the Debate.

Needs in today's world are changing: participation, creativity and being able to stand out from the crowd for the sake of one's society and country – these are life skills a school has to foster. This is particularly true against the background of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which puts a lot of political, social and individual stress on the students of Palestinian schools. Debate Clubs cannot change this, but they can help to pave the way for students' resilience in view of a so far unsecure future.

As a German Civil Peace Expert who has been working at two Palestinian schools in East Jerusalem now for about three years, I would like to stress one element of the Debating approach which I find highly pertinent to the Civil Peace Service Program and the school context alike. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is reflected in a deeply divided world of opinions and convictions. In political discussions the issue is often framed as a Yes/No topic: one of the speakers is considered to be in the right whereas the other's opinion is considered not only to be faulty, but easily perceived as one of an enemy. In Debates we have the Yes/No positions too. But the Debate approach teaches the kids in some way quite the opposite of what they often hear in the media: Debate teaches that the other one who holds the reverse position is not our enemy, but our opponent. Our weapons are not firearms or insults, but logical and convincing arguments. We ask the students to put themselves in the shoes of the other, this not only for finding better arguments against him/her, but also for perceiving the opponent as a serious interlocutor. To my mind, the main yield of the Debating approach might be this:

- A possible shift from perceiving the other as an enemy to perceiving him as an opponent – against whom I hold my most vigorous arguments, whom I challenge with my mightiest reasoning and with my most irresistible evidence.
- An opponent whom I treat in a respectful way.

This does not indicate that the other suddenly becomes a friend, not at all. In a Debate it is of utmost importance always to realize and spell out clearly the differences between the two positions. It goes without saying that this process of learning is not at all an easy task, at times it rather resembles a tightrope walk. Nevertheless, this promise which the Debating approach holds is much at the core of education and of Civil Peace Service alike. I am convinced: It is worth trying.

Last, but foremost, I would like to warmly thank the Director and Vice Directors of Collège des Frères / Jerusalem who fostered this approach and the teachers who cooperated with me in Debate sessions. I highly appreciate the support of the Director of the two campuses, Dr. Suleiman Rabadi who initiated the idea of Debate Clubs at Collège des Frères / Jerusalem – the Debate approach, in fact, is his brainchild, Fr. Daoud Kassabry, former Vice Director for the GCE classes who encouraged me continuously in a very kind way, Mr. Saliba Kuttat who was always very supportive and interested in this approach, Mr. Khader Khader who helped to start a Debate Club and who by his thoughtful remarks stirred some interesting ideas and the Vice Director for Development and Public Relations and Head of the English Department Mrs. Ghadeer Bishara who paved the way for a hopefully long-term cooperation with the English teachers in Debating in addition to translating and editing this book. My special gratitude goes to the dedicated teachers of CDF – Jerusalem: Mr. George Abu Said who launched the first Debate Clubs and whose enthusiasm helped considerably to give it continuity, Mrs. Amal Duaybis who did not only cooperate closely with me in Debate Clubs and in her 8th Grader English classes but in a very sensitive and professional manner managed to instill in students the love for Debating, Mr. Hanna Abu 'Issa who was a very kind and loyal partner over several semesters in Debate classes of Grade 9 GCE carrying it through despite some set-backs, Mr. Taha Shalodi who gratuitously made it possible for his class 9 GCE to use the Debate approach and was a gentle partner in teaching Debate and Mrs. Therese Sabella and Mrs. Anna Sleibi who gladly agreed to launch together a Debate Club and cooperated with me in a very pleasurable way.

My gratitude goes also to my German organization AGEH, Association for Development Cooperation – Cologne, particularly to my coordinator Dr. Michael van Lay, for the continuous support through a Civil Peace Service Program, financed by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany.

My very special and heartfelt thanks go to the students of CDF – Jerusalem who took part in the Debate Clubs and Debate class sessions. Again and again they surprised me with their enthusiasm, creativity and courage to step into Debating. When I see and experience them, I am less afraid about the future of Palestine.

Debating in English Classes

Ghadeer Bishara

*Vice Director for Development and Public Relations
and Head of the English Department
CDF – Jerusalem*

While the phenomenon of violence and counter-violence exacerbates in the Palestinian society for many and various reasons, so one stands bewildered before its severe repercussions in the school community; its treatment is no longer possible if it stayed confined to one individual (social worker) or a group of individuals (teachers and administrators). If this traditional method has had some success in the past, it is no longer feasible with the growing risks to the whole educational process given to the qualitative acceleration of information, the unprecedented decline in the development of curricula and limiting rehabilitation to educational crews and administration on selective or formal basis.

In this context, Debating becomes vital in education, especially in our Palestinian schools where education is still based on memorization and indoctrination and not being built on the basis of creativity and innovation. What makes the situation worse is that student-student dialogue became violent and sometimes reached the point of using punches; it had been almost lost between student and teacher since a long time because it is related to the same inherited methods of teaching and evaluation. This dialogue is even absent between teachers themselves, but even if it does exist, it's based on disharmony in an environment that has nothing new except buildings, classes and may be seats as well!

This melancholy image should not be dominating as long as we are able to change part of its colors and this is what has happened in the creative experience of using Debating through the cooperation of the English language teachers with my colleague Dr. Tiemann who praised the impressive results that are worth contemplation. This way, given to the laws that govern it, absorbed much of the violence inherent in the hearts of students and provided them an opportunity to express themselves and interact without keeping

hostility against each other. Difference in views took a different path among them under strict laws such as those used in the football game.

In this way the teacher also practiced the role of facilitator who does not have ready answers for anticipated questions and used his/her own skills to extract answers from the participants in their own way away from the rigid curriculum and its materials. In such an atmosphere, this experience has shown the importance of popularizing it on all classes and making it feasible to be used by teachers in various disciplines.

Among the most prominent benefits of debating is that it gives the student a lot of confidence and a tremendous desire to compete on the basis of mutual respect. Even the teacher himself/herself has gained a unique experience that made him/her accept the process to achieve desired purposes which are essential to the educational process. Debating allows students to engage in a variety of cognitive and linguistic activities that enhance their language learning and practices of the language and thus better language skills. Gradually, Debating becomes part of our teaching rituals and students will rise above the point of fear from interacting without mastering the language and by time their writing skills as well as their speaking ones will develop.

As a result, by applying this approach we can create a qualitative state of teaching and learning that can be generalized later at schools in Jerusalem.

THE BASICS

Chapter One

Introduction

What is a Debate and what are its inherent components? The best way to understand a Debate is to expose oneself to its rich practice which cannot be introduced fully in a plain definition. Therefore as a start, let us examine the following conversation on a Debate. The debaters whom we introduce here are “Ibrahim” and “Mariam”, their topic is: “Should a Debate course be introduced at school?” The floor is open now for “Ibrahim” and “Mariam”!

Ibrahim:

“My position is: Debating at school does not work well because kids take everything as a game, they are not serious enough for this.”

Mariam:

“You say, that kids are not serious enough, but I disagree; I think that having Debate courses at school is a great asset for education. Even kids of 6th Grade and even more those of 7th Grade and the higher Grades know how to stand up for their convictions, right? They can be very serious when they express their point of view! Besides, the topics we teach at school are in general very serious, aren't they? So why don't we direct our students towards a Debate course?”

Ibrahim:

“I'm afraid I can't quite agree with you. You are right when you say our curriculum consists of serious topics. But in class the teachers are the ones who provide the students with the correct material. In a Debate the kids themselves have to work out the arguments. How will you be sure that in Debating there will be no wrong ideas?”

Mariam:

“The problem with your point is that you assume learning goes by explanation. I don’t agree with this, learning is not made solely by teachers’ explanations, but the deepest results of learning will come by ownership. When students prepare a Debate they immediately realize that for this activity memorizing does not help at all. They quickly understand that there is no other way than delving deeply into the Debate issue and think it through by themselves. So when it comes to the Debate itself the students really own the topic they talk about. Isn’t this exactly what we want to achieve in education so that students think independently and critically?”

This extract is taken right out of a Debate. It allows us to delve deeply into some basic elements of Debating.

1. The Topics

The clearest impression you probably get from this short extract is: Ibrahim and Mariam strongly disagree with each other. To disagree is the constructive element in a Debate; it is the engine which upholds the motivation, provokes thoughts and keeps the process flowing with controlled clashes at its peak.

It is the particular Debate topic which generates such a beneficial disagreement. A Debate topic is always constructed by two distinct controversial sides: one takes the “yes” position which is the affirmative side, while the other one takes the “no” position, which is the opposite side⁽¹⁾ There is no lack of topics for Debates, quite to the contrary. The internet is full of suggestions in this respect. The challenge is to choose the “right” topic for a specific class which meets the needs and interests of a particular age and situation. For this it is advisable to involve the students in choosing the Debate topic, for example by “brainstorming” some ideas followed by a voting process in class. As an alternative the teacher could suggest a small list of topics from which the students choose. The teacher might also consider aligning the Debate topic with a particular curriculum.

It is worthwhile to give some thoughts to a good choice of Debate issues because the students’ motivation hinges to a great part on this. Particularly

(1) For definitions and explanation of terms see page 23 “Debating – Basic Terms”

some topics give the students the chance to explore uncharted areas; this might help considerably to expand their horizons.

Some suggestions for Debate topics are stated in page 31 “Topics for Debate”.

2. The Rules

In our short Debate extract from the beginning we can notice that Ibrahim and Miriam clearly relate to each other. As much as a Debate is about my own position, it is about the interlocutor with whom I debate – about his/her position and about him/her as a person. In our example, the two debaters do not attack each other personally, but they try to defeat the arguments of each other. They distinguish between their relationship as colleagues and the factual content of their communication. This is an important point to ponder again and again. However, the stronger you are about your topic, the better your opponent holds a likewise important position. This applies also to the democratic nature of the Debate approach: Everyone has an equal chance to express his/her point of view. The opponent has every right to see and voice the same topic in a very different light because he/she might be affected in quite another way, might have discordant interests, live in another cultural context and pursue divergent values. The Debate experience can help students to understand this underlying complexity of controversial topics which is the reason why there are no easy answers to Debate issues. Another asset of a Debate in a democratic process lies in the following: As Debates highlight the inherent benefits and risks of the two conflicting positions it can pave the ground for taking sound and informed decisions. But how can we guarantee that the Debate does not turn into a personal clash between both debaters?

‘Fair Play’ is the catchword which might help students to understand this crucial element of a Debate. Debating is a kind of sports which might be compared to soccer. In soccer, like in Debate, one of the main principles is ‘Fair Play’: treating the other politely and with respect. ‘Fair Play’ can be spelled out in a few basic rules, for example:

The other is not our enemy but our opponent who challenges us to give us the best. Therefore show respect!

For a list of Debate rules see page 24 “Basic Components of Debate”.

3. Arguments and Counter Arguments

In our short Debate example from the beginning Ibrahim and Mariam do not exchange just opinions but they also say *why* they hold their particular position. The way they talk sounds logical and lively as well. They both use full arguments. In the technical language of Debating the construction of full arguments is explained by a model called “A-R-E”. This model is an acronym which stands for three steps necessary for building up an argument:

A = Assertion

This is the position of a debater, also called statement. The assertion itself is not yet an argument.

Mariam's example: "Debate should be introduced at school".

R = Reasoning

Reasoning gives answer to the question “why”.

Reasons have to be logical and coherent.

Mariam's example: "...because learning comes with ownership".

E = Evidence

Evidence gives support to Reasoning. The two main sorts of Evidence are “Facts” (data, statistics, studies, polls) and “Examples” (narratives, life experiences). Evidence is the glue of life; it crosses the argument over to the experiences of the opponents and audience and gives credibility to the argument. At best, it makes the argument irresistible.

Mariam's example: "Kids of 6th Grade...already know how to stand up for their convictions, right?"

In our Debate excerpt Ibrahim and Mariam do even more than just presenting their arguments. We hear Mariam saying “*You say, that...but I disagree*” on which Ibrahim retorts “*I'm afraid I can't agree with you...*”. Here both of them turn to the opponent's argument, connect with it and present their “Counter Argument”, also called “Rebuttal” or “Refutation”.

Generally the difference between an argument and a counter argument is as follows: In an argument you prove that you have good reasons and evidence. But in a Debate it is not enough to be good. You have to prove that you are better, which means that your argument is better than the argument of the opponent. There are different possibilities how to do this. One way is

to draw a comparison between the argument of your opponent and your own argument. The following “Model of Counter Argument” might be helpful for school students:

- 1) “You say that...”. The Debater repeats shortly the argument of the opponent.
- 2) “I disagree because...”. The Debater presents his own reasoning to this particular point.
- 3) “When I compare your argument with mine, mine is stronger because... Therefore...”. The Debater compares and gives proof why his argument is stronger.

It is important that students connect precisely with only one argument of the opponent at one time. For many students, this is a challenging task. Through training and by a precise and encouraging feedback some good learning results are expectable.

A survey of the “A-R-E” – Model of argumentation and the Model for Counter Arguments are given below, see page 49 For more detailed didactic hints see page 45 *Models for In-Class Sessions*”.

4. The Participatory Approach to Debating

Probably everybody has heard about the U.S. Presidential Debates. They take place as part of the American General Election Campaign and find worldwide its audience, people talk about it even weeks later. This is one particular kind of Debate – held between two opponents aiming at opinion polls and voters' choice. Besides a multitude of other Debate formats some Debates follow highly formalized procedures; others do that within less formalized procedures. Sometimes a Debater has a partner on his side, sometimes he is part of a large team. There are Debates which are evaluated by judges and there are Debates where no winner will be announced. Debate Societies are invited to regular trainings and events; other Debates take place solely in the virtual online world. Debates vary enormously regarding their framework, their rules, the expected degree of argumentative sophistication and their outcomes.

As different as they might be, what all of them have in common is a basic understanding what a Debate is all about: a Debate is a kind of dispute in which two dissenting parties speak up for their position and disagree with

their opponents. One might say: the more mature the debaters are, the stronger the competitive character of a Debate takes place.⁽²⁾

Focusing here on the school context and considering different ages from 6th to 7th Grade onward we suggest following a Participatory Approach of Debating. This approach draws on the immeasurable urge and talent of every child for self-expression. This approach does not focus only on the fittest, but on the class or the group as a whole. The goal is participation of as many class students as possible. The Debate formats – “Debate with an Empty Chair”, “Debate through Questioning” and “American Debate” – as described in detail in pages 42 and 43 – are built in line with this main approach. Some of the *methods and activities* described in page 53 are applicable for full class Debates, others are more suitable for smaller numbers of students, for example they can be applied in Debate Clubs.

The Participatory Approach to Debating connects with the joy of learning. It comprises a whole range of rather playful methods which focus on social skills, creativity and critical thinking. In page 45 “*Methods and Activities*” you will find a great number of those exercises with detailed descriptions for application. All these methods lean towards a strength-oriented way of education which means: any intervention aims at strengthening the strengths of students. How this can be done is explained in page 33 “*Feedback for Debaters*”.

From which age can we offer Debate courses? Starting in class 7 or 8 Debate elements can be introduced into the curriculum. This does not exclude working with younger kids. On the contrary, the attitude for Debating should be fostered already at young age. The capacity for asking “*why*” by dealing with reasons, or the capacity to listen to a different opinion can be encouraged already in classes of the Primary School.

By doing this, a school has the chance to gradually build up in the students a disposition which is conducive to Debating in later years. Some suggestions for young kids concerning playful Debate elements are presented in page 45 “*Methods and Activities*”.

A higher degree of participation and strength-orientation in Debating has good consequences considering the competitive character of Debates. As compared with other formats, it is the special feature of the Participatory Approach to Debating that also accommodates the efforts of weaker students who are highly valued even if their argumentation is not fully satisfactory.

(2) See for the different formats for example: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Debate> 27.10.2012

In case judging is part of a Debate it is important that critical comments do not stifle students’ motivation but reinforce in them the notion that they are able to make progress. For hints how this can be done see page 35 “*Judging Debates*”.

5. Preparation – Stages – The Role of the Teacher

Let us come back to Ibrahim and Mariam whose Debate we attended at the beginning of this chapter. They both argue lively and seemingly without great efforts. Obviously they know their subject well. Knowing the subject well is indeed a prerequisite for Debating. Just floating around fuzzy ideas is nonsense. Debaters have to understand the terms and the concepts which the topic touches. In our example Ibrahim and Mariam had to know beforehand what “Debating” means. A clarification of the topic and deep thinking about arguments and possible counter arguments should be done prior to the Debate. In their preparation students should not only collect arguments for bolstering their position but also challenge their own arguments by thinking about the position of their opponents: what speaks in favor of the opponent’s position? What are weak points in my arguments and how might my opponent rebut them?

If the Debate topic is part of a specific curriculum it is advisable to announce the topic well ahead of time. In this case students might listen more attentively to the pertinent lessons in order to get some “ammunition” for their coming Debate.

When the “backstage” – period of preparation is finished the Debaters are prepared to enter the stage. The structure of a Debate is basically the same in most Debate formats. There are three stages:

- The Opening in which the debaters introduce their position.
- The Free Exchange in which the debaters present their arguments and counter the arguments of their opponents.
- The Closing in which debaters present their strongest argument again as a last chance to convince.

The Closing should be followed by a ritual of shaking hands between the two opposing teams.

If judges are involved they will give their feedback at the end of the Debate.

For more details about the stages see page 24 “*Basic Components of a Debate*”.

The role of the teacher is to create a climate of respect and to be careful about the proper procedure and rules. The exchange of arguments in the Debate is done solely by the students themselves; the teacher has no leading role in this. The teacher has to be careful not to present himself/herself as the one who knows the true answer; students should feel free to disagree with their teacher. In Debate trainings the teacher should comment on the students’ performances and give feedback. For more hints on how to do this see page 33 “*Feedback for Debaters*” and *Worksheets “Feedback for Observation of Individual Students”* and “*Judging a Debate*”. A model script for Debate moderation is given in page 37 “*Script for Debate Moderators*”.

Debate is a piece of theatre performed by the Debaters. Like in every theatre play the audience of a Debate plays a vital role. Besides the two opponents, the audience is the third party of a Debate who – unlike the opponents – wants to be and can be convinced. Like the audience of a theatre play the Debate audience wants to see an excellent performance. It wishes to be entertained well and it expects to learn something new. By the mere presence of an audience a Debate might acquire momentum of a great day. Debaters sense these expectations; it makes them sometimes “rise to the stars” as one teacher put it after a Debate of 6th and 7th Graders in front of an audience. To stage from time to time, a public Debate can be very refreshing and exciting for all who take part; the debaters, the audience and the teachers. It shows the educational power of such an approach and the joy Debating might render.

Chapter Two

Debate in a Nutshell – The Key Elements

Basic Terms

In Debating different terms are used. Some of them are explained here:

DEBATE:

A process (a kind of sports) in which two opposing teams speak up to support their arguments and each one disagrees with those of the other team.

RESOLUTION:

It’s also called “Statement”. It is an issue about which the two teams argue. The issue to be debated is always controversial. It is usually worded with a solution to a problem. The debaters take two different “Positions” through which they debate the resolution; the “pro-position” is also called “affirmative side” and the “contra-position” is called the “opposite side”.

ARGUMENT:

It is a controversial “Position” which consists of an “Assertion”, supported by “Reasoning” and “Evidence”.

EVIDENCE:

It supports the “Reasoning” of an argument. Different types of Evidence are used in an argument. In general, evidence can be divided into two categories: “Facts” (data, statistic, studies and polls) and “Examples” (narratives and life experiences).

COUNTER ARGUMENTS:

This term is also called “Rebuttal” or “Refutation”; it explains why a team disagrees with the arguments of the other team.

Basic Components of a Debate

– THE TOPIC:

Highly controversial, posed in a way that assumes an answer with “yes” or “no”.

– THE AIM:

To convince, not to put down.

– THE PARTICIPANTS:

Two parties and the audience; equal number of debaters from each side.

– THE RULES:

Fair Play: The opponents are not our enemies, but they challenge us to give the best!

No put downs of the opponents!

No interruptions of the opponents!

Both parties take role alternately.

– THE MODERATOR:

The moderator starts and ends the Debate. He/she is the only one who is entitled to interrupt, explain the rules and keep time.

– THE STAGES:

The Debate has three parts:

1) The Opening

One member of each team stands up, introduces his/her team mates, shows his/her team’s position and describes a major reason and evidence to explain this particular position (2 minutes for each team).

2) The Free Exchange

At this stage two members of each team debate the issue. The moderator will interrupt this exchange after 7 minutes and announce a three minute break. In this break the two teams will consult within their team counter-arguments and new arguments.

After the break an empty chair will be added to the first rows of the debaters. This empty chair can be occupied by the debaters of the second row to offer their arguments. The one who takes the empty chair voices his/her argument; then he leaves the chair for other team mates who might now occupy it.

3) The Closing

One member of each team stands up and gives a short resume of the Debate by stating the strongest argument. For example: *“For me, it was striking in our Debate that...and this is particularly important because...”*

At this stage, no more new arguments will be accepted.

The concluding arguments start in the same order as the Opening Statements.

The opposing teams stand up and shake hands with each other.

The A-R-E Model of Argumentation and the Structure of Counter Arguments

An Argument is: A-R-E

A: Assertion (what? A statement)

R: Reasoning (why?)

E: Evidence (how?)

- **Data (statistics, studies or polls).**
- **Examples from life.**

How to Counter an Argument?

1. “You say that...”

In 3 to 7 words, repeat the argument of the other. This helps the audience to follow your line of thinking.

2. “I disagree, because...”

Here you put forward your reasoning to this point.

3. “When I compare your argument with mine, mine is stronger because... Therefore...”

Here you compare both arguments – yours and the one of the other – and prove that yours is stronger.

Preparation for the Debate

The one who wants to win a Debate has to be well prepared – students understand this very well and are motivated to use the preparation period for delving deeper into the topic.

During the preparation period the teacher should focus on the following aspects:

- The topic and its terms have to be clarified: What is the focus of the Debate topic and what does it NOT comprise?

For example: the topic *“Is Internet chatting harmful for students, yes or no?”* could be clarified as follows: *“Chatting in the Internet indicates having real-time communication by text-based messages within the specific setting of a Chat Room in the internet. The topic DOES NOT cover the usual e-mail exchange or accessing websites in general.”*

At this stage of preparation it is also advisable to use the *“Question Fan”* see page 103 which helps to make sense of the topic.

- What do the students already know about the topic and what is their position? Let them brainstorm their knowledge: reasons which speak for their position and evidences (examples).
- The students should challenge themselves by asking: What are the weak points in our arguments? How can we deal with them in the Debate?
- The students should anticipate the arguments of their opponents: What might be the arguments of our opponents? How can we counter them?
- Students should engage in some kind of research by interviewing adults / peer students and by consultations through the books and the internet, see page 85 *“Interviews and Websites Checking for Debate Preparation”*.
- Students might prepare an “argumentation kit” so as to write on index cards their arguments and some standard wordings. For more debate expressions see page 28 *“Phrase Samples for Debate”*.

Phrase Samples for the Debate

General Remarks:

It might be helpful to display posters in the Classroom with lists of Model Phrases for Debates. You might choose some phrases from the following list.

Explain to the students that in English language they need to be polite especially when they disagree with others.

The following phrases might be useful in the debate.

1. The Opening Statement

First of all let me introduce my team colleagues...

The issue we debate today is...

Our position is as follows:...

The main point we want to raise here is...

2. Expressing Opinion

- In my opinion,...
- From my point of view,...
- The way I see it...
- As far as I'm concerned,...
- I'm convinced that...
- I honestly feel that...
- I strongly believe that...
- I definitely think...
- As it is widely known...
- There is no doubt that...
- Actually,...
- I suppose...
- I'd prefer...

3. Expressing Disagreement

- I'm not so sure about that
- I don't think that...

- Do you think so?
- I'm not so certain...
- Don't you think it would be better...?
- I see your point but...
- That's all very interesting, but the problem is...
- I'm afraid I can't quite agree with you...
- I don't agree. I'd prefer...
- I disagree...
- Shouldn't we consider...
- But what about...
- On the contrary,...
- Do you really think so?
- Don't you think it would be better...?
- This isn't the point...
- That's highly debatable...
- Frankly, I doubt if...
- Let's face it,...
- The problem with your point of view is...
- It's possible that you are mistaken with this...

4. Partly Disagreement

- Well, you have a point there, but...
- I agree with you to a certain point, but...
- Well, but...
- Yes, in a way, however...
- Yes, I suppose so, however...
- That's worth thinking about, but...

5. Giving Reason

- To start with, ...
- For this reason...
- In fact, ...
- The main point I want to raise is...
- When you consider that...
- What I'm saying is...

6. Asking again for Clarification

- Can you be a little bit more specific?
- What's wrong with ...?

7. The Closing Statement

- We pointed out that ...
- Our opponents have failed to address our main point which is ...
- Therefore we are convinced that ...

Topics for Debate

A topic for a Debate should be rather simple, meaningful and challenging for the students. Everything which is of interest to the students might make for a good Debate topic. In order to be sure that the topic is motivating you might ask them for suggestions.

We certainly have to consider the age of the students when deciding on a topic. The following issues came up in several debates with students from Grade 6 to Grade 9. These examples might stir up more ideas to debate in the class:

School issues:

- “All students should learn to play a music instrument.”
- “School should start in the morning with a physical exercise.”
- “Students should not be obliged to wear school uniform.”
- “We should have 2 breaks at school and not only one break.”
- “School should provide Tablet Computers instead of books.”
- “Chat rooms in the Internet bring harm to the students.”
- “Cell phones should be allowed in school.”
- “Junk food should be banned from school.”
- “Students' parliaments at our school should consist half of girls.”
- “At school girls and boys should sit mixed in the benches.”
- “Girls and boys should play football in the same team.”
- “Extra-curricular activities at school should be compulsory.”
- “Lessons about Conflict Management should be part of the curriculum.”

Issues of general interest:

- “Personality is more important than good looks.”
- “Animals should not be kept in zoos.”
- “City life is better than country life.”
- “Boxing as a sport should be forbidden.”
- “Watching TV has a bad influence on kids.”
- “Olympic Games are a waste of money.”
- “Football Stars deserve high salaries.”

- “Eating meat is unethical.”
- “Animals should not be used for medical research.”
- “Parents should not buy war toys for kids.”
- “Violence is sometimes necessary.”
- “A single person can change the world.”

Political issues:

- “It is more important to have a strong leader than to have a strong parliament.”
- “In elections it is better to vote for parties than to vote for persons.”
- “Money should not be invested in space travel but be given to poor people.”
- “The death penalty should be banned in all countries of the world.”
- “Foreign countries should intervene in countries where human rights are violated.”
- “Values of the Western World and of the Arab World will never be compatible.”
- “For Palestine, journalists are more important than physicians.”
- “Palestinians who have some spare money should give donations rather to poor kids in India than to give it to Palestinian kids.”
- “Palestinian schools should have Debate competitions with Israeli schools, yes or no?”
- “Concerning the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: A two-state solution is better than a one-state solution, yes or no?”

For short debates with the aim of activating the students’ creativity one could also take some rather funny topics, like:

- “Parents should be able to watch their kids in class by Video Conferences.”
- “Computers should replace teachers.”
- “School hours should change to be from 12 o’clock to 6 pm.”
- “Cats are more intelligent than dogs.”
- “It is more fun to be a teacher than to be a pupil.”
- “The weather should be the same every day.”

Feedback for Debaters

Debating is apt to provide a high level of intrinsic motivation and make learning enjoyable. But of course, learning is a very complex process; it does not simply come only from fun. Like in other school sessions, it is important in Debates to learn from others’ mistakes and successes likewise. The more students understand their strengths and weaknesses, the more effectively they will learn.

A precise and supportive feedback is the key for learning. The most promising way to apply this is by giving a so-called “constructive feedback”. A “constructive feedback” does not merely focus on the mistakes but offers specific examples to make the process better. It suggests in a very concrete way a constructive change of behavior. For example, instead of saying: “You repeated the same argument again!” You might say: “you were proactive in the Debate. But there is something you might work on more: you could introduce a greater variety of arguments. Why don’t you search in the internet beforehand and choose some of your findings for your argumentation?”.

Such a “constructive feedback” strengthens the students’ confidence so that they will be able to improve their performance. It makes the student understand how precisely he/she can do better. This kind of feedback is likely to bolster the students’ motivation for Debating and – even more importantly – for learning in general. It is advisable to introduce the “constructive feedback” – method to the students. This might be done in the following way:

In order to learn well we have to know our weaknesses and strengths. We can help each other to learn this by giving a “constructive feedback”. How is this done? You all know the layers of a “Burger”, don’t you? We can understand how to give a “constructive feedback” by the example of a “Burger”.⁽³⁾

(3) This example is taken from: Iris Komarek, Ich lerne einfach! Das NLP-Programm fuer effective Lerntechniken, Munich 2010,

A Burger and a “constructive feedback” have in common that both consist of three parts. In looking at the layers of a “Burger” we can understand how a “constructive feedback” works:

- The “Cap of a Burger” stands for:
What behavior precisely was good in the Debater’s performance?
Describe it in a very concrete way!
For example: “Your opening statement was very clear!”
- The middle part of the Burger “the meat” stands for:
What exactly should you improve? How can you do it better?
For example: “Sometimes you did not have examples to bolster your arguments. When you prepare you might write down a list of examples for your argumentation so that you have them readily at your disposal when debating.”
- The “Bottom of the Burger” stands for:
What was good in the student’s performance in general?
For example: “On the whole, I think you were quite helpful to your Debate team.”

For a training unit, the teacher can pair each debater with one fellow student from the audience who has to observe “his/her” debater during the Debate. The Debate Forms “*Feedback for the Observation of Individual Students*” on page 110 might be helpful for taking notes.

Judging Debates

Students like to compete. Competing lies in the heart of every debate and it can be very exciting for the students, for the teachers and for the parents who might be sometimes in the audience as well. Competitions take place within a class, between classes or between schools. Competitions call for a winner. So, who wins a Debate? The one who has the right position? No, because in Debates there is nothing called “a right position”. Both sides of any Debate topic can claim that there is some kind of truth in their position; there are always good reasons for both sides.

The proof of a good Debate lies in the skills of the debaters to convey their message, to present their arguments convincingly and to rebut the arguments of their opponents in a logical and persuasive way. Therefore the observable skills of the debaters can be judged. The following four skills can be evaluated in details:

– **Knowing the subject:**

Does the debater show detailed knowledge about topic and its facts?

– **Constructing arguments:**

Does the debater include reasons and evidence in his arguments?

– **Listening and connecting with the other:**

Does the debater listen?

Does the debater connect with the arguments of the other?

– **Talking well:**

Does the debater talk in a comprehensive and memorable way?

Is the voice clear?

Does he/she show politeness?

Judging Debates is not an easy task. As a judge you have to abstain from your own opinion. The sole job of the judge is to be an attentive observer who focuses his mind on certain observable skills the debaters show.

In general, there are two different settings you might create:

a) Evaluation by Judges:

Judges can be teachers, parents or students – everybody who is a good observer. Judges might use a standardized observation checklist, for example see “*Judging a Debate*” page 111. As the judges’ résumé might sometimes be distressing for the Debaters it is advisable in their verbal feedback that they focus on the strengths of the students rather than on their shortcomings. Hints for this are given in page 33 “*Feedback for Debaters*”.

b) Feedback by the Audience:

The members of the audience are not judges in the above mentioned sense. But it is interesting to know more about their perception of the Debate. They could be asked to give their votes at the end of the Debate. After the voting the Debate facilitator might ask who in the audience changed his/her opinion due to the Debate. Those who changed their mind might be asked what made them change their point of view.

Script for Debate Moderators⁽⁴⁾

Introduction:

- I am pleased to welcome you all to see our public Debate.
- The topic being debated today is...
- Seated on my right is the team which represents the position... This is the Affirmative Side (pro-side).
- Seated on my left is the team which represents the position... This is the Opposite Side (contra-side).
- I extend my special welcome to our Judges (If there are judges)
- I am your Moderator.....

The Debate Structure:

The Debate will have 3 parts:

- The opening in which one of each Debate teams introduces his/her team members, the team’s position and describes the main reasoning and evidence for their position.
- The Free Exchange: At this stage two team members of each position debate the issue with their opponents. The moderator will interrupt this exchange after 7 minutes and announce a 3-minutes break. During this break the two teams will consult with the participating members’ counter-arguments and new arguments.
After the break an empty chair will be added to the first rows of the Debaters. This empty chair can be occupied by the Debaters of the second row for placing their arguments. The one who takes the empty chair voices his/her argument. After this he leaves the chair for team mates who might now occupy it.
- The Closing: One member of each Debate team stands up and gives a short resume of the Debate by giving the strongest argument. At this stage, new arguments will no more be accepted.

(4) Adaptation from: Judith Schurman of the Quebec School Debating Association, QSDA)

The Rules:

Heckling is not allowed. The Debate teams take turns. Fairness is our basic rule. Are there any questions about the rules?

I now call upon the Debate team in favor of... to introduce its position.

At the end of the Debate:

I thank all the Debaters for their arguments and counter arguments and I congratulate all of you for your performance. I thank the members of the audience for their attentiveness. The Debate is now concluded. The Debaters may pass by and shake hands.

FORMATS – METHODS – ACTIVITIES

Chapter One

Debate Formats following the Participatory Approach

Debate with an Empty Chair

General Considerations:

This Debate Format involves all class students: during the preparation period all students work on developing arguments. In the Debate itself 10 students are active debaters, the others act as audience and might give feedback afterwards.

This Debate Format might also be stretched over two class sessions (one session for preparing the arguments; another one for the active Debate).

Material needed:

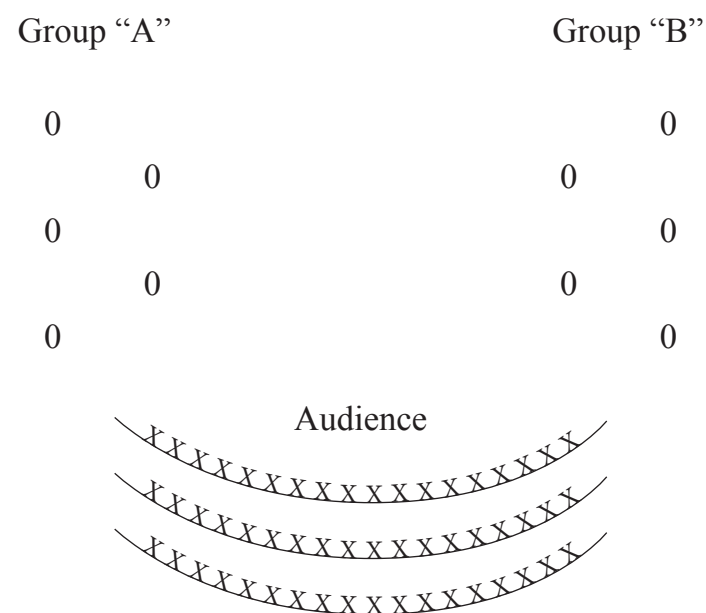
- Worksheet “*Debate Organizer: Reasons and Examples*”, see page 108.
- Twelve movable chairs.

Procedure:

1. Define a controversial topic (Yes / No topic).
2. Assign the class in equal number into the two positions. Do this arbitrarily, for example by letting them draw out of a hat a snippet of paper with “A” or “B”.
3. Form subgroups of 4 within each of the two groups. For example: In a class of 32 students you might create 4 subgroups for each of the two positions. Ask each group to develop arguments supporting their position. Hand out to them Worksheets “*Debate Organizer: Reasons and Examples*”. Explain to them that they should give:
 - a. Reasons which support their position.
 - b. Examples in support of their reasons.

4. After that set 5 chairs for the “A” side in front of the class: 2 in the front row and 3 behind in the second row. Ask each of the preparing groups which adopt the position “A” 5 students to be seated on those chairs. Facing them, set 5 chairs for the students of the position “B”: again 2 in the front row and 3 behind in the second row. Here 5 students of group “B” will be seated.
The remaining students are the audience.

The setting will look like this:



5. Begin the Debate by explaining the rules and the structure of this Debate format, see page 24 “*Basic components for a Debate*”:
- **Stage 1: Opening Statements**
Given by one student of the first row (He stands up then introduces the team mates, the team position and the basic argument).
 - **Stage 2: Free Exchange**
 - a) Exchange between the 2 students of the first row of both sides; both groups are alternating in their argumentation.
 - b) Short interruption by the Moderator:
The students of the first row consult now with the students of the second row how to counter the arguments of the opposing side.

- c) Free Exchange with an empty chair in the first row:

The moderator adds an empty chair to the first rows and announces that the students of the second row are invited to join the Debate: They can occupy these chairs whenever they want to argue. After their contribution they have to leave the chair and go back to the second row so that the chair is available for another student of the team.

- **Stage 3: Closing Statement**

One student of the first row of each team stands up, repeats the position of his/her team and states, as a kind of résumé of the Debate, why he/she is convinced that the position of this team is stronger than the opposing one.

The teams stand up and shake hands with the opponents.

6. Ask the Audience:

- Which arguments were the strongest ones raised on both sides? Why?
- What could we do to make it better?

Reflection:

- Ask the two teams how they felt after the debate.
- Highlight the issue of being sometimes carried away by one's feelings and then one easily forgets: Debate is about Fair Play. Emphasize that we want to do better than some TV-Shows do: Debate is not about fighting a person, but about fighting an argument. Only the one who is polite will convince the others!

Variations:

If you want to stretch this Debate Format into two sessions you might conduct the first session in the following way:

- The preparation subgroups (small groups of 4 students, preparing Reasons and Evidence for one of the two positions) choose a speaker. The speaker of the subgroup “A” stands up and gives the arguments of the group. The speaker of the subgroup “B” stands up and gives his group's arguments. In this way, the subgroups take turns in presenting their main arguments.
- In a second stage of the session the groups get the Worksheet “*Debate Organizer: The Arguments of your opponents*” see page 109 which asks for Counter Arguments to the opponents' stance. Again the subgroups take turns in reporting their results.

Debate Competition through Questioning

General Considerations:

This Debate Format is different from the format “*Debate with An Empty Chair*”, see page 39 This format includes two additional elements:

- A stage in which the two teams question each other (“crossfire”).
- The debaters are evaluated by judges. One of the teams will be declared the winner. For judging Debates see page 35 “*Judging Debates*” and “*Judging a Debate*”, page 111.

Procedure:

The stages of Debates with this format will be as follows:

1. The Opening Statements.
2. The “Crossfire”: Each team asks 5 questions to the other team.
3. The Free Exchange with an empty chair on each side.
4. The Closing Statements.
5. The decision about the winner declared by the judges.

Preceding the preparation for Debate with this format the students will be handed out the “*Debate Competition through Questioning Worksheet*”, page 112.

American Debate

General Considerations:

This format focuses on a controlled way of connecting with the arguments of the opponents. It allows up to 12 students to participate actively in the Debate.

Classroom Setting:

A long table is needed with two groups of students sitting on either side.

Procedure:

1. The teacher divides the class into two groups: Group A and Group B.
2. The teacher announces the Debate topic and allocates the two opposing positions for the two groups, for example the pro-position for Group A, the contra-position for Group B.
The teacher allows time for both groups to find their arguments (reasoning and evidence). He/she asks the students to allocate one argument to each one of their team.
3. After a certain time of preparing the arguments the teacher asks the students to choose six students from each group for the Debate. These six students of Group A sit on one side of the long table, and the six students of Group B sit on the other side of the table.
4. The teacher explains the rules of this Debate format:
 - You take turns, for example if a member of Group A starts, a member of Group B continues and so forth.
 - Don’t talk longer than 1½ minutes.
 - The student of Group A, who starts to present the first argument, has to end his sentences with addressing the student of Group B by saying: “Do you agree with me?”
 - The student of Group B answers by saying: “*You say that... I don’t agree with this because...*”. After this rebuttal the student proceeds to present his/her own argument. He/she ends with asking a student of the other group: “Do you agree with me?”

5. The teacher starts the Debate and let it develop across the table in zigzag path.
6. If the Debate reaches its end let it go backwards to the starting point.

Reflections:

Discuss with the students the importance to connect exactly with the previous speaker's argument by rebutting his/her argument before putting forward one's own argument.

Chapter Two

Methods and Activities

(A) MODEL FOR IN-CLASS DEBATE SESSIONS

Session 1: "The Basics of Debate"⁽⁵⁾

Age:

- Preferably 7th to 9th Graders.

Goals:

- Students learn basics of Debate and argumentation.
- Students experience some first-hand elements of Debate.

Material needed:

- 3 printed papers with one of the basic Debate skills for each: "Argue rationally!" "Have a colourful language!" "Listen and Connect to the others!".
- A poster displaying the A-R-E model, see page 26.
- Worksheet "*Debate Organizer: Reasons and Examples*", see page 108.

Procedure:

1. The teacher introduces the topic:

What is a Debate?

A Debate is different from a discussion. In a discussion you delve broadly into different aspects of a topic whereas in a Debate you focus on two positions: the pro-position and the contra-position; it is always about "yes, I agree" or "no, I disagree".

(5) This unit was prepared and carried out in an 8th Grade English Class in cooperation with Mrs. Amal Duaybis at CDF Beit Hanina.

The topic of a Debate:

A topic can be anything which is challenging, meaningful, interesting for you and for the society. Debates always have a controversial topic; for example: “a school day should always start with a 30 minutes physical exercise: yes or no?”.

Controversial means: There are always two sides, two possible answers, and each of these two sides has some truth. There are always good reasons for both sides! Therefore it is worth to delve deeply into the reasons for both sides.

The aim of the Debate:

The aim of Debates is to convince, not to put the other one down! We can only convince somebody if we look at him/her seriously.

Our “weapons” are our arguments. We are passionate in our Debates, but passionate for the topic, not against a person.

The participants of a Debate:

There are always two Debate teams; one argues in favour of something, that is the “pro” team and the other debates against is the “contra” team. There is also a third party in the Debate game which is in fact very important: the audience. The audience is our real target group, because in most cases we will not convince the other Debate team, but we have a good chance to convince the audience.

The rules of a Debate:

A Debate is a kind of sports. We have competitions through Debate between two teams. Like a football game for example, each team tries to make “scores”. In Debates we get “scores” when we make a strong argument.

Debating comes from the British tradition of Fair Play. Fair Play means that everyone has an equitable chance to participate: we take turns in talking; the opponents are to be treated with respect: we talk in a polite way and do not interrupt each other.

The opponents are not our enemies, but our partners – therefore: Fair Play is the main rule in Debating.

2. What makes a good Debater?

Basically, three skills are important for Debating, and you all have all of

them to a certain extent:

When talking briefly about them, the teacher shows the following three skills; the headlines should be printed on a large sheet of paper.

ARGUE RATIONALLY!

By giving reasons, by giving facts – not just opinions.

HAVE A COLOURFUL LANGUAGE!

To be boring is one of the great sins in a Debate – you have to touch the emotions of people, for example by showing life experiences.

LISTEN AND CONNECT TO THE OTHERS!

Do not just throw arguments against your opponents, listen to what they say and connect with their arguments.

The teacher asks students to identify with one of these three skills. After announcing each of the skills he asks the students who identify with this skill to stand up. Each group gets applause from the whole class.

The three skills are all represented among us – so we have a good chance here to have substantial Debates.

(We will now build on our skills).

3. What makes a good argument?

Arguments are the spice of Debates – we do not want to hear just opinions, but arguments.

We are confronted with arguments everywhere in our life:

In politics: for example “*The Palestinians should have their own state*”.

In advertisements: for example: “*These jeans make you look cool!*”.

At school: for example: “*Students should wear school uniforms*”.

Some arguments are successful, others not at all. What makes a good argument? Arguments have to be convincing.

For the following explanation of the A-R-E model of argumentation, the teacher displays a Poster with the model.

MODEL FOR COMPLETE ARGUMENTATION

An Argument basically has three components: A-R-E

A-R-E is an acronym for:

A = Assertion

R = Reasoning

E = Evidence

A = Assertion:

This is a simple statement that states something, for example: *“Students should wear school uniforms”*.

R = Reasoning

This answers the question “why”. For example: *“Students should wear school uniforms BECAUSE this takes away competition among students about who has the most fashionable clothing item.”*

E = Evidence

This answers the question “how do you prove this?” It supports the Assertion and the Reasoning by proof. Proof can be

a) by data (from statistics, research, polls, etc...).

b) by examples from life.

As evidence for example you could say: *“Especially parents who do not have so much money to buy always the trendiest garment for their kids are greatly helped by this rule”*.

If you build your arguments in accordance with A-R-E model you might have a good chance to convince.

4. Training with The A-R-E Model:

- a) The teacher forms small groups of students (4 in one group) and hands out the Worksheet “Debate Organizer: Reasons and Examples”. Teacher defines the topic of a Debate and allocates to half of the groups the pro-position; the other half of the group takes the contra-position. Students in groups work out 3 full arguments on a given topic.
- b) The teacher asks one representative of each group to present the arguments of his/her particular group. The order of the presentations will be first a pro-position, after this a contra-position, and so on.
- c) Reflection: Did the arguments include all 3 parts of A-R-E model?

Session 2: “Building up Counter Arguments”⁽⁶⁾

Age:

Preferably 7th to 9th Graders.

Goals:

- Students learn to build up Counter Arguments.
- Students understand the three main parts of a Debate.
- Students improve their cooperative learning skills.
- Students experience firsthand elements of Debate.

Material needed:

A poster displaying the Counter-Argument model, see page 26 *The A-R-E Model of Argumentation and the Structure of Counter Arguments*.

Procedure:

1. Short review of the last session by the method “Numbered Heads Together”:

The teacher breaks up the students in groups of four. Teacher explains: Each of the four students gets a number (from 1 to 4), and each group gets a character (“group A”, group B”, and so on). Teacher poses questions and students “put their heads together” to find the answer. Students have to make sure that everybody in the group understands fully the answer. Teacher calls the name of a group and gives a number. The student who has this number is now the group’s spokesman and authorized to display the answer.

The teacher asks questions on Debating, for example:

- What is the difference between a Debate and a discussion?
- Who is the most important party in a Debate?
- What are the rules of a Debate?
- What makes a good Debater?
- What does A-R-E stand for?

⁽⁶⁾ This unit was prepared and held in an 8th Grader English Class in cooperation with Mrs. Amal Duaybis at CDF Beit Hanina

- Please build up a full argument for one of the two positions: “Art classes should be part of the curriculum till 11th Grade?”

2. The teacher explains how to build counter arguments:

We already know how to build up an argument. Now we will go one step further:

In order to win a Debate it is not sufficient to show that your argument is strong, but you have to prove that your arguments are stronger than those of your opponents.

A promising way to do this is to compare between the arguments of the opposing team and your own arguments. You have to build up a COUNTER ARGUMENT, also called REBUTTAL or REFUTATION.⁽⁷⁾

An example:

Speaker 1: “Bananas are better than Oranges because they contain more potassium”.

Speaker 2: “You say, Bananas are better than Oranges, but I disagree: oranges are better than bananas because they contain more vitamin C.”

In this example, we do basically what we did when practicing the A-R-E Model: both parties give their reasoning. For both parties it is true what they say. But what is missing is: None of the two parties tells us why we should prefer its argument and not the one of the opponent. None of them tells us why its argument is better than the other one.

What is missing here is: There is no comparison between the two arguments.

Let’s try another version of the same Debate:

Speaker 1: “Bananas are better than oranges because they contain more potassium.”

Speaker 2: “YOU SAY THAT bananas are better than oranges, I DISAGREE: oranges are better than bananas BECAUSE they contain more vitamin C. WHEN I COMPARE YOUR ARGUMENT WITH MINE, MINE IS STRONGER BECAUSE many foods contain potassium, whereas only a few contain a good amount of vitamin C. Therefore you should prefer oranges!”

In this short Debate Speaker 2 will win because he/she compares his/her reasoning to the reasoning of Speaker 1 and proves the superiority of his/her own argument.

The teacher displays a poster with the Counter Argument-Model when explaining the following:

The steps for building up Counter Arguments are:

1. “YOU SAY THAT...”

In a nutshell repeat the argument of the other, this helps the audience to follow the Debate.

2. “I DISAGREE BECAUSE ...”

Here you put forward your reasoning to this point.

3. “WHEN I COMPARE YOUR ARGUMENT WITH MINE, MINE IS STRONGER BECAUSE ...Therefore...”

Here you compare both arguments with each other and prove that yours is stronger.

Let’s do a short training, let’s play the game “I disagree”:

The teacher divides the class into groups of 4.

The task is to develop a counter argument in accordance with the counter argument model.

Half of the groups get a particular position; the other half gets the counter position. For example:

Group A holds the position: “Art Classes should be taught at school till 11th Grade because in Art students can develop their creativity”.

Group B holds the position: “Art Classes should NOT be taught till 11th Grade but stop at 6th Grade because in our world knowledge about scientific topic is most important; for this we need more time at school”.

Both groups have to develop counter arguments. They do this by starting the sentence with: “I disagree because...” and continue by drawing a comparison between the argument of the other and one’s own position.

Teacher introduces a short Debate between the students with the topic of the previous exercise:

Setting: 4 students on each side, 2 of them in the first row, 2 of them in the second row.

Structure: In the first part of the Debate only the 2 students of the first

(7) The following example is taken from: Middle School Public Debate Program, 2002 John Meany and Kate Shuster, www.middleschooldebate.com 17.11.2012. Due to experiences with classes the refutation model has been partly modified here.

row debate with each other, after a short break for consultation within the team an empty chair is added to the first row and students from the second row join the Debate.

Basic rules:

- Taking turns in giving arguments.
- No putting downs – don't fight the person, only the argument!
- Introduce your argument according to the A-R-E model and the Counter Argument-Model.
- Reflection on practicing the Counter Argument Model in the Debate.

(B) METHODS FOR FULL – CLASS INVOLVEMENT⁽⁸⁾

Town Meeting

General Considerations:

This method is applicable for the whole class.

Procedure:

1. Present briefly a topic with its two opposing sides as objectively as possible. Give some background information to both viewpoints.
2. Tell the students that you would like to get the opinions of the class on this topic. Instead of asking students from the front explain to them that you will do it according to the method “call on the next speaker”: After his/her contribution to the Debate, a student will look around in the room and call on another student who indicates by raising his/her hand that he/she wants to speak.
3. Ask the students to be brief with their contributions so that many can participate in the “Town Meeting”. For example, you could fix as a time limit 2 minutes for each speaker.
Suggest calling at first on those students who did not speak before.
4. Finish the “Town Meeting” when students run out of new arguments.

Variations:

Place the students on two different sides of the room according to their own positions. Apply the “call on the next speaker” method. In this case, the next speaker has to be someone from the opposing group.

(8) Melvin L. Silberman, *Allyn and Bacon*, Active learning: 101 strategies to teach any subject 1996.

Expanding Debate⁽⁹⁾

General Considerations:

This Debate is apt to stimulate Debating in the whole class.

Material needed and Classroom Setting:

- Paper and pens for the students.
- Six movable chairs in front of the class.

Procedure:

1. Select a controversial topic.
2. Choose six students – three on each side – for a Debate about this topic. Seat them in two semi circles at the front of the class.
3. Ask the other students to take notes during the Debate about arguments for their own Debates which will take place later.
4. Start the Debate by reminding the six participating Debaters of the Debate Rules (see above Chapter 2, page 24 “Basic Components”) and start the Debate procedure.
Finish the Debate after 10 minutes or when it runs out of new arguments.
5. Separate the whole class into groups of four. Designate to each two of them the “A” – position and to the other two the “B” – position. Let them debate simultaneously.

Reflection:

Ask the students to express their reflection on the Debate.

Variations:

Reverse the sequence: Start with Small Group Debates and end with a Debate in front of the class with 3 Debaters on each side.

Involve the Audience⁽¹⁰⁾

General Considerations:

In order to keep the interest of all class students alive without getting unfocused this activity involves at a certain point the whole class. This exercise provides also an opportunity for learning about the Closing Statement of a Debate.

Material needed:

- A soft ball.

Procedure:

1. Define the Debate topic.
2. Divide the class into subgroups of four students. Half of the subgroups prepare arguments for the pro-side, the other half for the contra-side.
3. Ask two students from the pro-side and two students from the contra-side to debate actively in front of the class.
4. Explain that the two groups will take turns by tossing a soft ball to the opponents of the other side. The one who is in possession of the ball is allowed to make his/her point.
5. After some minutes of Debating between the two small teams interrupt and ask for a next stage of the Debate which is the involvement of the whole class.

The rule is:

- Students in class who want to contribute an argument – irrespective whether they are pro or contra – have to lift their hands.
- The main Debater from the front who holds the ball tosses it now to one of the students in class who want to give an argument.
- After the class student made his/her point he/she tosses the ball to somebody else in class who has *another* argument to contribute – also irrespective of whether it is a pro-argument or a contra-argument.

(9) Following here: Mel Silberman, *Active Learning*, Allyn and Bacon, 1996.

(10) Thanks to Mrs. Uta Knoerzer, Tuebingen / Germany, who suggested to us this method called “Tuebingen Debate Method”.

Point out that it is important that:

- Only the one who has the ball is entitled to talk.
 - Only students who have new arguments should lift their hands.
6. Interrupt after some time and let the ball be tossed back to the 2 Debate teams in front of the class.
- Ask all four of them to have their Closing Statement: After we heard so many arguments for both sides, why do you still hold to your opinion: What is your most convincing argument?

Reflection:**Discuss with the students:**

- What are the strongest arguments?
- What made them strong?
- Did you manage to connect really with the arguments of the other?

Variations:

If for example your audience consists of interested parents and other adults you could likewise involve them, perhaps at the end of the Debate.

TV-Show: Meet Our Guest!**General Considerations:**

This method is applicable for the whole class. Students will be encouraged to question critically opposing views of an issue.

You might invite the same guest for both of the opposing views. In two rounds of the “TV-Show” students question both of the two positions. By this, they learn that it is possible – and indeed necessary – to understand the argumentations of both sides, to question critically one’s own opinion and to find also some elements of truth in the opposing stance.

Material needed:

- A mock microphone.

Procedure:

1. Invite a Guest Speaker to your class on a subject which is controversial.
For example: “Should rich Palestinians help poor kids in India or should Palestinians rather give their money to help kids in Palestine?”
Inform him/her beforehand that the session will be carried out like a TV-Show. This “TV-Show” will have two rounds in one session: In the first round you want him/her to take the stance A: “Yes...”. The students will question him/her critically. After a very short break the second round is starting. Then he/she has to take the stance B: “No...”. Now the students will question critically those arguments. The Guest Speaker should give a short opening statement (3 or 4 sentences) and be prepared to answer the questions of the students.
2. Before the Guest Speaker enters the class let the students know that we will have a “TV-Show” today with a Guest who will tell us his/her position “A” concerning the topic. As an audience the class is invited to ask him/her critical questions. After this first round, we will welcome a second Guest who will take the opposite stance and whom the class also will challenge with critical questions.
Tell the students that you yourself have in this “TV-Show” the role of the Moderator.
3. Introduce the Guest Speaker with position A, after his Opening Statement, ask the students to pose questions. Go with the mock

microphone to the particular student who wants to ask. After about 10-15 minutes close this round of the TV-Show, thank the Guest Speaker and accompany him to the door. Bring in the second Guest Speaker – who, to the surprise of the students, – is the same person. Welcome him/her, and conduct the same procedure as in the first round.

Reflection:

Ask the students:

- How did you feel about questioning both opposing views?
- What were the strongest arguments of the “two” guests? What made these arguments strong?
- Did you notice whether there were questions that embarrassed the Guest? What do you think, why were these questions difficult for him/her?

Variations:

- After the two rounds of the “TV-Show” divide the Classroom into two halves – one side represents the A-position, the other one the B-position. Ask the students to take a stand on that side which was more convincing for them in the “TV-Show”. Go around with the microphone and ask some of them why they took this stance, which were the strongest arguments they heard and what made the arguments strong.
- Prepare the students beforehand by introducing the WH Word Questions:
“What?” / “Who?” / “When?” / “Where?” / “Why?” / “How?”
Let them develop questions to the TV-Topic along this type of Questions.
(See below Worksheet “The Question Fan”, page 103)
- Introduce two different Guest Speakers at the same time. Seat each of them together with half of the class. In parallel, the students question critically their interlocutor. After 10 minutes, finish this round and ask the two Guest Speakers to move to the other group.

Numbered Heads Together for Debate!

General Considerations:

The Goals of this cooperative learning strategy are:

- 1) to reinforce team work.
- 2) to support learning among each other.
- 3) to hold groups and individuals accountable for their learning.

This debating method can be exciting to develop arguments and counter arguments in a group.

Material needed:

- Small slips of paper each with a number from 1 to 4 for all groups.

Procedure:

1. Students are placed in groups, each group is given a character (“A”, “B” and so on) and each student is given a number (from 1 to the maximum number in each group). The teacher poses a question and students “put their heads together” to figure out the answer.
2. The teacher prepares beforehand several issues for Debates.
3. The teacher announces the first Debate issue. Half of the groups have to find one “pro”-argument. The other half of the groups have to find one “contra”-argument. The groups have to ensure that every member of the group knows the argument well and can present it.
4. The teacher calls a group and a specific number of a student randomly.
5. The student of that group with that specific number offers for his/her team the argument they prepared.
6. The teacher calls out a group and a specific number of a student from the other half of the groups who has to find a counter argument to the other group’s argument. After this, he has to present the argument of his/her group.

Reflection:

Talk about the group work:

- What did you do to ensure that everybody in your team understood fully the group argument?
- The strength of a Debate group lies in the strength of its weakest link. In team work it is important to involve all group members.

(C) METHODS FOR DEBATE CLUBS

Develop Together a Story

General Considerations:

This activity fosters the ability to listen and connect with each other. It is suitable also for younger kids.

Classroom Setting:

Chairs have to be arranged in a circle. If the floor has a carpet, it is preferable to sit on it.

Structure:

1. The teacher announces that we will develop together a fairytale. The teacher will start with one sentence and the student sitting clockwise next to him/her builds on the teacher's sentence.
Everybody can add up to 2 sentences. What is important is that there can be nothing wrong in fairy tales, because everything is possible in such a story. But there is one rule we have to stick to: everybody has to connect with the sentences of the one who spoke directly before him/her.
2. The teacher starts, for example with: "Once upon a time there was a little camel sitting under a palm tree and it was very sad." In clockwise direction the next student builds on this sentence.
3. This continues till the circle comes to an end.

Reflection:

The teacher asks the students if they have an idea what this exercise could have in common with a Debate.

The teacher asks what we can learn from this exercise for Debating:

- Do not repeat, but build on what the others said.
- Debate is not only talking but also listening.
- There is a great variety of possibilities how I can connect with others and build on what they said: for example I can go on in the same line

of an idea, or I can change into sideways or change into the opposite direction. These are different strategies.

- There is always a part you can well prepare for a Debate, but there are also a lot of improvisations and surprising turns. It is like a game which we play with joy.

“Yes, but” – Debate Game⁽¹¹⁾

General Considerations:

A fairly large group of students can participate in this Debate activity. By this exercise, students practice to counter arguments by improvisation.

Classroom Setting:

You need empty space so that students can line up in two rows.

Procedure:

1. Separate the class into two groups: Group A and Group B.
2. Ask students to line up in these two groups in a way that students of each group are looking at the backs of their group mates.
3. The two first students in the two rows are facing each other.
4. Flip a coin to decide which group starts.
5. Tell an argument which the groups have to counter with another one.
6. If Group A is the first to start, the first student in the line of Group A begins by countering the argument. He/she begins the sentence with: “Yes, but...”.
When he/she finishes his/her sentence he/she goes to the back of his/her group.
7. Now the first student of Group B has to say a sentence in replying to Group A’s argument with a rebuttal starting with: “Yes, but...”.
When he/she finishes he/she also runs to the back of his/her group.
8. After all students had their say starting with “Yes, but...” finish the game.

Reflection:

Ask the students:

- Which arguments were particularly difficult to answer?
- Was it difficult to improvise in such a situation?

To be able to improvise is a great strength. For a Debate it is beneficial to prepare one’s main argument beforehand. The teacher points to different possibilities for preparation, like using the library and the internet, interviewing experts and others.

Variations:

You might take the time which this class game needs. Use the game more often as a kind of energizer and let the students try to beat the time.

(11) Source: CanTeach, in: <http://www.canteach.ca/elementary/listspk2.html> 15.10.2012.

The Debate Hero⁽¹²⁾

General Considerations:

You can do this activity with a few students in front of the class.

Classroom Setting:

You need some space in class. Furnish the space like a rally course running through a “magic country” with 3 or 4 stations which a protagonist has to pass.

Procedure:

1. Choose a student who will play the role of the “Debate Hero”. Give him/her an argument which he/she has to defend in the game. Choose 3 or 4 other students who will play the role of “Strangers” who will challenge the “Debate Hero” with counter arguments.
2. Tell the following story to the class: A “Debate Hero” is traveling with his/her argument through a magic country. Along the way, he/she encounters several “Strangers” who will challenge him/her with rebuttals. The “Debate Hero” needs to find a counter argument to the arguments of the “Strangers” in order to proceed on his way.

Reflection:

- What was the strongest counter argument?
- Did you perhaps recognize some strategies the “Debate Hero” used to overcome arguments of the “Strangers”?

Tossing the Ball

General Considerations:

This Debate method is suitable for groups between 10 and 20 students. The method highlights the sportive character of Debating and is usually quite exciting for students.

Material needed:

- A soft ball.
- A rope for dividing a “soccer field”.

Procedure:

1. Select a controversial issue, for example “Should girls and boys play football together in one team?”
2. Divide the class into two groups. Ask them to prepare together arguments in support of their position.
3. Prepare the “soccer field” by dividing the room into two parts with a rope.
4. Let each team convene in their particular half of the “soccer ground”. Inform them that we will have a ball game. The rules are: Toss the ball to one of the members of the other team by telling one argument in favour of your position. The one who catches the ball throws it back and gives one of his team’s arguments.

Reflection:

Highlight communalities between Debating and sports:

Debating and sports are both about Fair Play.

Fair Play means:

- You have to adhere to the rules. One of the rules is to throw the ball; not just an argument against another, but to make it in a way that it can be caught or that it is understandable for your opponent.
- Different from a war, in sports the opponents are considered to be not your enemies. Therefore you have to be polite – not to attack the other person by the ball, but to “toss” your argument in a way that someone of the other side can really catch it.

(12) Inspired by: IDEA International Debate Association, http://www.idebate.org/teaching/exercise_details.php?keyword=all&num_rows=62&p, 19.3.2011.

- In this kind of sports you also have to be attentive, otherwise you miss the “ball” (the arguments of the other). Only when you connect and relate to what he/she said you have a chance to show that your argument is the better one.

Role Play Debate⁽¹³⁾

General Considerations:

To design a Debate as a Role Play helps to identify with positions in a delightful way and explore the arguments deeply.

Procedure:

1. Define the topic of the Debate, for example “Violent TV movies are harmful for students, yes or no?”
2. Assign two different positions to the students: Half of the class (divide them in several small groups) are film directors, the other half (also in several small groups) are considered to be parents who are concerned about the impact of violent movies on their kids.
3. Ask the students in their groups to prepare arguments for their position: give reasoning, give evidence (facts, examples).
4. Each small group chooses one of its members to take part in the active Debate.
5. Run a Debate about this topic between the two roles: the film directors versus the concerned parents.

Reflection:

Discuss with the whole class:

- What were the strongest arguments?
- What made those arguments strong?
- Considering the rules of a Debate, what could we have done better?

(13) Adapted idea from: <http://www.teachnet.com>, 26.9.2012.

Mini Debate⁽¹⁴⁾

General Considerations:

This might be a good activity for students who are afraid to speak up in front of the class. The Mini Debates will be conducted in one-to-one situations. Furthermore, this activity gives a chance for Debating to students who are not confident to talk for a long time in English.

This activity is suitable for a Debate club with up to 14 students.

Classroom Setting and material needed:

Set up several tables – each suitable for 2 students – in a big circle. The tables should not be connected to each other. At each table there is a sheet of paper with a Debate topic, at every table a different topic. This means: 14 students need 7 topics to debate.

Procedure:

1. Divide the class into two groups: Group A and Group B
2. Explain that Group A is in the middle of the tables' circle, Group B will be in the outer ring of the circle.
Group A will move counter-clockwise around the desks, Group B will move clockwise around the desks.
At each table there is a Debate topic. Students in the middle will argue for the pro-stance, students on the outside will argue the contra-stance.
3. Remind the students of the basics of a Debate: Take turns, speak not longer than 1 ½ minutes, give reasons, give examples and be fair!
4. After this give them a sign indicating that they should move to the next Debate table.

Reflections:

- What was easy for you, what was rather difficult?
- Sometimes you probably were in the position to argue against your personal opinion. What do you think we can learn from such an experience?

Feedback Methods for the End of Sessions

FACES

There are a number of ways to ask for feedback. A playful and non-threatening way is to connect the feedback questions with a number of faces: a smiling face, a neutral face and a sad face.



These faces: a smiling one, a neutral one and a sad one are put at 3 places of the room. Students are asked to take a stand at the particular place of their choice depending on their answers to each feedback question:

- At a smiling face.
- At a neutral face.
- At a sad face.

The following questions for example could be asked:

- Did you like the Debate?
- Did you like working in your group?
- Did you feel that others listened to you?
- Was everybody included in what we did?

The teacher asks some of the students to give reason why they choose this answer.

FROM ZERO TO HUNDRED

This is a quick reflection on how satisfying was the session, at the same time it allows students to assess their learning.

Firstly the teacher explains that the following activity is meant to give feedback on the session and that an honest feedback might give valuable hints to improve next sessions. Students should not be afraid to be critical.

The teacher puts a long rope across the room, fixes it with adhesive tape. At one end of the rope he/she puts a paper sheet with the number “100 %”, at the other rope's end a paper sheet with “0 %”. Right in the middle of the rope a paper sheet with “50 %” is placed.

(14) Adaptation from: <http://www.eslcafe.com/idea/index.cgi?display:913442219-3803.txt> 26.9.2012.

The teacher asks several questions pertaining the session. After each one the students have to take a stand at a place between “0 %” and “100 %” which matches best their answer. In this continuum “100 %” stands for “perfect!”, “0 %” stands for “not at all”.

Possible questions:

- How much were you satisfied with this session?
- How much did you learn today?
- How much were you satisfied with working in your small group today?

After the students take their stand the teacher asks them to think whether they really feel comfortable with their position. In the case of feeling comfortable, the teacher asks some of the students why they stand at this point between “100 %” and “0 %”.

Important: The teacher has to emphasize that feedback is a valuable means to understand better how we can work together effectively. The teacher stresses that everybody has the right to express his/her opinion and feelings, and this can’t be discussed. It is essential to listen how the other feels about the session. We are different and therefore we might have different feelings about the same things. The feedback of all will help to improve the sessions.

(D) METHODS FOR YOUNGER KIDS

Toss the Duck!

General Considerations:

This method helps young students to develop the habit of listening to each other in a playful way.

Material needed:

A soft toy, for example a stuffed duck toy.

Procedure:

1. You ask a question which has two possibilities: either yes or no.
Explain to the kids that only the one who is in the possession of the “duck” (or whatever soft toy you have) is allowed to talk: The student who holds the “duck” has the floor.
2. Point out that they should not interrupt each other; they have to wait till the “duck” was tossed to them.
3. Explain that they should give a sign by lifting their hand when they want to say something and then the “duck” will be tossed to them.
4. Finish it when it runs out of steam.

Reflection:

Talk with the students about the need to listen to each other.

Take a Stand!

General Considerations:

This method is applicable for a whole class. It can be a launching pad for introducing essential Debate rules. It can also serve as an “Ice Breaker” at the beginning of a series of sessions.

It is suitable also for younger kids.

Material needed and Classroom Setting:

- A mock microphone.
- A rope.
- Some empty space is needed so that students can take a stand in different places of the room.

Procedure:

1. Ask students to stand together in the middle of the room. Explain that you will ask questions and will suggest to each of these questions several answers (two, three or four answers). Depending on their preference for one of these answers, students take a stand in one corner of the room which you allocate for this particular answer. After each ‘question – answer unit’ let the students convene again in the middle of the room before asking the next question.
2. Pose the first question and suggest several answers which you assign to a certain place in the room.

Start for example with this question:

- “Where do you live?” – “in the Old City of Jerusalem” / “in Beit Hanina” / “in Shua’fat” / “in another place?”

Comment on the answers chosen by most of the students and comment on which one of the groups is the smallest. If there are students with the answer “in another place” ask them with the mock microphone where they live.

Other questions you might ask:

- “What are your favourite subjects at school: Languages, Sports, Science, Arts or others?”

Now go with the mock microphone to some of the students (if it is a small group: go to each of the students) and ask them why they stand here. Also ask them for their names if you do not know them.

3. Start to pose questions with a compulsory choice of only two alternatives. Explain that they have to decide for only one side of the topic.

Make it clear that these are “Either-Or” Questions, draw a line, perhaps laying a rope in the middle of the room.

You might start with the question:

- “What food do you like more: Pizza or Hamburger?”

Go with the microphone to one student of each group and ask why he/she decided for this option.

Next question:

- “Imagine you would be a Superman or a Superwoman, would you prefer to have the ability to see everything as if you have X-Ray eyes – or would you prefer to have the ability to fly?”

After students decided for one of the two options let them discuss among themselves why they think their decision is better than the decision of the other group.

After some minutes interrupt them and ask them to appoint a speaker. Start a short Debate between the two speakers and let others join them. Be sure that only one person speaks at a time and that the two groups take turns.

Reflection:

Ask the students:

- Was it hard to decide for one option?
- Was it hard to listen to the other side?

Introduce some of the basics rules of Debate: prepare your arguments, take turns, listen well and connect with the viewpoints of the others.

Ice Cream or Chocolate? Apple or Banana?

General Considerations:

This activity is suitable for young kids.

It helps students to develop first stages of reasoning: to answer the question “why”.

Concurrently, it helps to reinforce the habit of listening which is also a basic skill for Debating.

Material needed and Classroom Setting:

- A mock microphone.
- Objects or pictures of some generic groups: for example of sweets, fruits, other foods, animals and school subjects.
- Divide some space of the room into two parts, for example by putting a rope on the floor.

Procedure:

1. Let students stand together. Show them 2 different items or pictures of items of one genre, for example: a picture of chocolate – and a picture of ice cream.

Ask the students which one they would prefer: chocolate or ice cream?

The students who prefer chocolate go to one part of the room; the ones who prefer ice cream take a stand in the other part of the room.

Go with a mock microphone to one student of each side and ask him/her: why do you prefer chocolate – ask one from the other side: why do you prefer ice cream?

2. Let them all come back to the full group and ask the next question, for example: What do you like more: an apple or a banana?

Apply the same method as stated before.

3. Go through the same procedure with other questions, like:
 - Which animal do you like more: a cat or a dog?
 - What do you like more: Pizza or Hamburger?
 - What do you like more: Drawing or Singing?

Create questions like those according to age and interest of the students.

Reflection:

Talk with the students about:

- “Why?” is the most important question in life. Therefore: always ask “why?” and give reasons for what you think.
- Nobody is like you. Everyone of us is different from the other. This is also the reason why I like sometimes what my friend does not like at all, and what she likes I do not like either. Everybody has the right to be different and to talk about it! When we listen what the other kid likes, we can learn a lot about her/him. Therefore it is good to listen to each other.

I am Special!⁽¹⁵⁾

General Considerations:

This exercise is suitable for younger kids. It prepares them to learn giving evidence, in this case: giving examples for their opinion.

Material needed:

- Blackboard and chalk OR whiteboard and whiteboard markers.

Procedure:

1. The teacher writes on the blackboard attributes kids can identify with, for example:
 “I am special.”
 “I am kind.”
 “I can work hard.”
 “I make people happy.”
 “I am calm.”
 “I can manage my anger.”
 The teacher explains what these expressions mean.
2. The teacher asks each student to choose one for himself/ herself.
3. The teacher asks students to give examples when she/he shows this behavior.

Reflection:

The teacher tells the kids that everybody is different. Sometimes this is difficult to accept. We understand each other better when he/she tells us examples from his/her life.

Variations:

The teacher might give only one sentence to be completed by giving a reason, like:

“I am a good friend because...”

The teacher might also give some alternative answers from which the students might choose, like:

- ... because I play nicely with others.”
- ... because I share my toys with others.”
- ... because I can keep secrets.”

(15) Adapted from: Helen Sonnet: *Positive Intervention for Pupils who Struggle at School*, 2010 Routledge.

(E) TRAINING FOR CONSTRUCTING ARGUMENTS / COUNTER ARGUMENTS

Preparing Arguments

General Considerations:

A good preparation is the groundwork for a good Debate. Already this preparatory period provides ample opportunity for learning. Therefore it is important to have a clear structure. “Preparing My Argumentation Worksheet” page 106, builds on the A-R-E model of argumentation, but goes beyond it by asking further critical questions: about the beneficiaries of a proposed measure and about long-term consequences of a certain position.

Material needed:

- Worksheet “Preparing My Argumentation”, see page 106.

Procedure:

1. Define the topic of the Debate and divide the class into groups of four: half of the groups takes the “pro”-position, the other half takes the “contra”-position.
2. Distribute the Worksheet to each small group and ask them to fill in:
 - At the top of the sheet writing down their particular assertion.
 - Finding three reasons which support their stance.
 - Finding for each of the three reasons an example which shows the importance of this reason.
 - Defining one or two beneficiaries who will have an advantage of the proposed position.
 - Writing down one longterm consequence this proposed position might have.
3. Let two groups from both sides report on their findings.
4. Conduct a Debate between the two sides.

Reflection:

Discuss with the students the importance of thinking about beneficiaries from proposed actions – why might it be important to include them in a Debate?

Discuss with the students the importance of thinking about long-term consequences to a proposed action – what is the benefit of talking about this in a Debate?

Variations:

Firstly you might let students only fill in the first 2 questions in the Worksheet: finding reasons and finding examples.

In a later session you might introduce the questions for the beneficiaries and the long-term consequences of a proposed step.

Complete the Argument! – The Model: A-R-E

General Considerations:

Students should learn that good arguments basically consist of three parts which can be memorized by the letters: A-R-E.

A = Assumption (the statement/the position).

R = Reasoning (giving reasons which buttress the assumption).

E = Evidence, which mainly might consist of “Data” and/or “Examples from life”.

Material needed:

- Copies of worksheet “The A-R-E Matrix”, page 104.
- Poster or flip chart showing the model, see page 26 “The A-R-E Model of Argumentation”.

Procedure:

1. Distribute the copies of “The A-R-E Matrix” worksheet, use topics which are suitable for the age and the interest of the students.
2. In class, explain the model of good argumentation: A-R-E.
3. Divide the students into pairs; distribute a Worksheet to each pair.
4. Ask the students to work with their partners on the Worksheet by filling in the missing positions: either give Evidence, or give the Assertion/Position, or insert the missing Reasoning – whatever is left out in the chart.
5. Check with the class the results of each partner work.

Reflection:

Ask the students:

- Which columns were easy to fill in, which ones were more difficult to handle?

Take up the difficulties students faced in doing this exercise. When necessary, explain again the A-R-E model of argumentation.

Strategies to Build up Arguments

Complete arguments are built along The A-R-E Model, see page 26.

In order to be specific you might ask yourself the following questions when thinking about arguments:

Think about:

- Long-term consequences / short-term consequences of your position.
- Benefits if your suggestions will be realized.
- Ethical assets of your position (*How does your suggestion help to live a good life?*)
- Psychological implications of your position (*Who is affected if your position will be put in place? How will they be affected?*)
- Implications for the community / for the society (*Does it affects life in the community/society? How?*)
- Financial implications (*How much does it cost? Who pays for it?*)

The Devil's Advocate

Test your own arguments by putting yourself in the shoes of the others:

Switch to the position of the others and counter your own arguments!

Which might be the main arguments of the other team? How might they refute your ideas?

You will find out when you do a short role play in which you take the role of your opponents!

Strategies to Counter Arguments

The goal of a counter argument is to lessen its proof. There are different strategies to do this.

Basically, there are two main strategies:

- To deny the whole argument.
"I do not agree at all with your argument."
- Or to concede that the other party has a point although you refute part of it.
"This sounds convincing, but..."
"Although part of your argument is valid, there is another aspect we have to consider..."

When listening to the arguments of the other party it is advisable to listen for some fallacies in the argumentation of your opponents. If you perceive one of the following fallacies you might pick them up. Some wide-spread fallacies in argumentation are the following:

1. THE ARGUMENT IS NOT SIGNIFICANT

Example: *"Reducing global warming will increase bureaucracy."*

Is the effect the Debater states really the most important one to consider? Or are there consequences which might be more severe and which speak more for your position?

Example for a Counter Argument: *"You say to reduce global warming will increase bureaucracy. But the consequences of global warming are much more severe than the consequences of bureaucracy. Therefore we have to act against global warming."*

2. INDUCTIVE ARGUMENTS

Is the example the opponents give really typical for the whole? / Do they treat ONE example as the only factor?

Example: *"Football stars earn far too much, I read that the player David Beckham used to earn about 125m Pounds a year; this is unethical!"*

Examples affect understanding and influence opinions. But: What is true for one example is not necessarily true for the whole situation!

Example for a Counter Argument: *“There are plenty of examples, but this one is exceptional and not true for all football players.”*

Or: *“You are right in this case, but we also have to consider other factors, for example players risk their health in this very tough sport.”*

3. DEDUCTIVE ARGUMENTS

Are the statistics applicable to a specific case?

Example: *“The average German family has about 1.3 children. If you meet a German you have to be aware that he will have one sibling at most!”*

What is true statistically is not necessarily true for every specific case. Find an example where the statement is false!

Example for a Counter Argument: *“In general, you might be right, but statistics can’t tell us about the individual situation. In this specific case...”*

4. FALSE CAUSE:

Always ask whether the single cause which is mentioned in the argument is sufficient to explain the effect which is stated in the same argument.

Example: *“The number of suicide attacks decreased since the Wall was built.”*

Example for a Counter Argument: *“Just because something happens after a certain incident does not prove that the first thing caused the second. It means: for the decrease in the number of suicide attacks we have also to mention other causes, like...”*

(F) METHODS FOR PREPARING DEBATES

Interviews and Website Checking for Debate Preparation

THE TOPIC:

The Task:

Please conduct three INTERVIEWS WITH ADULTS (parents or teachers or relatives) about this issue. Find out what is:

- Their opinion.
- Their reasoning.
- Their evidence (data they quote, examples they relate).

Write down:

- With whom you spoke (a parent? a teacher? a relative?), do not mention names!
- The arguments of the interviewee (reasoning, evidence).

THE TOPIC:

The Task:

Please conduct three INTERVIEWS WITH SCHOOL STUDENTS about this issue. Find out what is:

- Their opinion.
- Their reasoning.
- Their evidence (data they quote, examples they relate).

Write down:

- The age of the students you spoke with, do not mention names!
- Whether it was a girl or a boy you spoke with.
- The arguments of the students (reasoning, evidence).

THE TOPIC:

The Task:

Find in the INTERNET some websites which provide an answer to the Debate question. Find two arguments for each of the two positions of the Debate with particular reasoning and the evidence (references, data):

Position A) >>> “Yes, ... because... For example...”

Position B) >>> “No, ...because... For example...”

Write down:

- The two arguments you found for each position with their reasoning and evidence.
- Quote the exact Internet source (website name and URL) you used and state the date when you accessed the website.

What Makes a Good Debater?

General Considerations:

Here students are asked to reflect on Debating skills and to present their working results by demonstrating their presentation skills.

Material needed:

- Flip chart paper.
- Flip Chart Stand.
- Markers.
- Adhesive tape.

Procedure:

1. The teacher points out that some specific skills are needed to be a good debater. The students will work out in groups the most important skills.
2. The teacher breaks up the class into groups of 4 or 5. Each group gets half of a flip chart paper and 2 markers.
The task for all groups is:
 - Define 3 important skills a debater should have in order to be convincing. Give reasons and examples for each of the 3 skills!
 - Write down the biggest mistake you can think of that a debater could make. Give an example for a mistake!
 - Choose one of each group as presenter and prepare with him/her what he/she should say and how he/she should use his/her body language!
 - Be also aware of your voice, talk in a clear voice!
3. Presentation in the Plenary.

Reflection:

The teacher asks the students:

- Did the presenters give reasons and examples?
- Was the voice clear and was the body language convincing?

Variations:

- If the students want to, they might present their group results in a team.
- You might ask the students in their group work to prioritize the 3 skills for a good Debater: Which one do you think is the most important one, give reason for your choice!

Mind Maps as a Tool for Debate Preparation⁽¹⁶⁾**General Considerations:**

Mind mapping can be a creative way of recording information and preparing notes for a debate.

Material needed:

- Blackboard or whiteboard, crayon in different colors or markers.
- Index cards and pens in different colors for the students.

Procedure:

1. Draw a simple mind map on the blackboard using colors and symbols. For example: someone prepares the shopping list for a grocery store. Explain how the colors and symbols help the brain to store information.
2. Develop together with the students at the blackboard another example from a Debate, for example: “Girls and boys should sit mixed in the benches at school”. Suggest starting by a pictorial center in the middle of the map to depict the main idea (for example a girl and a boy sitting beside each other). Ask the students for suggestions and arguments we could add around the pictorial center. Tell them that each idea should be represented only with very few words (for one idea perhaps only one word for reasoning and one word for supporting evidence).
3. Divide the students in groups of two and allocate to them the “A” or “B” position to the Debate topic. Let them prepare their arguments together on an index card as a mind map.
4. Ask every two students to share their mind maps with two other students. Ask some students to share their mind maps by drawing them at the blackboard.

Reflection:

- Is this a way which could help you to prepare your arguments for a Debate? Do you see advantages of this method?

(16) Adaptation from: Mel Silberman, *Active Learning, Allyn and Bacon, 1996.*

Drama Game for Debate Expressions⁽¹⁷⁾

General Considerations:

This exercise encourages controlled but spontaneous interaction in class. Students practice Debate expressions.

Material needed:

- A list of Debate expressions.
- A poster to be displayed in front of the class.

Procedure:

1. Present a list of Debate expressions, for example:
 - Furthermore...
 - On the other hand...
 - In my opinion...
 - You have a point, but...
 - Nevertheless...
 - Well, in my view...
2. Select 4 students and start with one argument, for example:

“Olympic Games are a waste of money because this money could be spent for helping the poor people of the world.”
3. Ask one of the 4 students to go on with the argumentation by starting his/her sentence with the next expression, for example:

“Furthermore this money could help to support students of poor countries to get sport lessons from good sport teachers.”

Ask the next student to continue the Debate by starting with the next expression, for example:

“On the other hand, the Olympic Games are perhaps the strongest motivation force for doing sports, because they are watched by millions of people all over the world.”

Ask the next student to continue the Debate by starting with the next expression on the list, and so on.

Variations:

The use of these expressions might be reinforced by a written exercise.

(17) Variation of an exercise suggested in: <http://www.eslflow.com/debateexpressions.html> 26.9.2012.

A-R-E in Colour

General Considerations:

With this activity the students get familiar with The A-R-E Model of constructing arguments. The colours which are used here to distinguish between the three elements of an argument help to memorize the main elements of an argument.

Material needed:

- Carton sheets in different colours displaying one of the characters: “A”, “R” and “E”.

Structure:

1. The teacher introduces the students to The A-R-E Model of building up arguments, see Chapter 2, page 26, “The A-R-E Model of Argumentation”.
2. The teacher divides the students into groups of 3 or of 6 and let them construct arguments according to The A-R-E Model.
The teacher distributes to each group cartons on which is written: “A” on a white carton sheet, “R” on a blue carton sheet and “E” on a red one.
3. Presentation of the arguments: Three students present one argument: one of them expresses his/her position by lifting up the white “A” carton, the other one adds the reasoning by showing the blue “R” carton and the third student relates the evidence by displaying the red “E” carton.

Reflection:

Talk about the importance of preparing complete arguments with these three components. If necessary, explain the model again.

One Minute Speech

General Considerations:

This activity provides a possibility to train students in applying the A-R-E Model of argumentation and the Counter Argument Model, see above Chapter 2, page 26 “The A-R-E Model of Argumentation and the Structure of Counter Arguments.”

Material needed:

- Snippets of paper; each one showing a different Debate assertion. The snippets are as some kind of “lots” to be put into a hat.

Procedure:

1. The teacher writes as many Debate topics as there are students in class on snippets of paper and puts them as “lots” into a hat. Students are asked to draw one of these “lots”.
2. The students prepare a short speech of 1 minute with an argument along The A-R-E Model.
3. The students present their argument in a 1-minute-speech to the class.

Reflection after each speech:

Did the argument comprise all three A-R-E components?

Variations:

The same procedure could be applied for constructing counter arguments.

Counter Argument Exercise

General Considerations:

This activity reinforces the ability to connect precisely with the arguments of the other.

Material needed:

- Flip chart paper.
- Markers in different colours.
- Adhesive tape.
- The Counter Argument Model, see above Chapter 2, page 26 “The A-R-E Model of Argumentation and the Structure of Counter Arguments.”

Procedure:

1. The teacher gives a Debate topic with a pro- and a contra-position. He/she divides the class into groups of 4 to 6 students; half of the groups takes the pro-position, the other half the contra-position.
2. The teacher gives to each group a flip chart paper which he/she prepared beforehand. This flip chart paper is divided into two parts: one for the pro-argument, the other half for the con-arguments.
3. The task: Each group thinks about arguments for their position, including reasoning and examples. They write their arguments into the part of their flip chart paper which is marked for them. The other side remains open.
4. After the groups have found their arguments they exchange the flip chart paper with one of the other groups (pro-groups exchange with contra-groups).
Now the group has to find precise counter arguments against the arguments of the other group and write them down into the empty column besides the arguments of the others.
5. Presentation: All groups present their counter arguments to the arguments of the others by introducing the flip chart paper in front of the whole class.

Reflection:

Discuss with the students the importance of connecting closely to the arguments of the others. Display the Counter-Argument Model.

Counter Ball – Evidence Ball – Impact Ball⁽¹⁸⁾

General Considerations:

This activity motivates the students to think about multiple responses to an argument.

Material needed:

- A soft ball.

Procedure:

1. The teacher presents an argument and tosses the ball to one of the students.
2. The student who holds the ball must give a counter argument. After this, he/she tosses the ball to another student who also presents a counter argument to the teacher's argument.
3. The process continues till no further new counter arguments are generated.

Reflection:

The teacher leads a discussion on which counter arguments were most convincing and why.

Variations:

Play the same game with another focus: Instead of "Counter Ball" call it "Evidence Ball": Instead of generating counter arguments the students have to present an example which bolsters the argument.

Another possibility:

Play the same game with yet another focus: Now call it "Impact Ball": When catching the ball, the students have to present an impact to the argument. For example:

If the argument is: "Wearing school uniform is a good idea because the students do not compete so much about who wears the latest fashion."

Impacts will be as follows:

- Impact on the students: "Poor students are not singled out by clothing" / "students can concentrate better on their learning" / ...
- Impact on the parents: "Parents do not have to spend so much money for the latest fashion" / ...
- Impact on the school: "If students focus more on their studies they will perform better" / ...

(18) Source: IDEA: International Debate Education Association, http://idebate.org/teaching/exercise_details.php?ExerciseID=267, 19.3.2011.

Combination of Written Exercises – Oral Debates

Analyzing a Text

Give a text (it could be for example an advertisement) to the students. Let them read the text and determine:

- What is the reasoning of the argumentation in the text?
- What is the evidence (data? examples?) with a view to the argumentation of the text?

Multiple Choice Statements

Talk with the students about what makes an argument strong:

- a) It has to give a logical reason.
- b) It has to be specific (give evidence as data and/or examples).
- c) The language has to be convincing.

Give a Worksheet with different statements to the students. Ask the students to put the statements to the test according to the above mentioned criteria. Let them decide between the different statements on the worksheet:

- Which is the strongest statement?

Ask the students to give reasons for their decisions: what makes it strong?

Homework Preparation for a Debate

Give the students the topic for the next Debate. Ask them to write down in homework 5 arguments pro and 5 arguments contra the assertion. By preparing for both sides of the argumentation students learn to anticipate arguments of both sides. In the next class session conduct a Debate on this topic.

Debate Notebook

Ask the students to keep a Debate Notebook. After each Debate, let them write down the topic and the most important arguments of both sides of the Debate.

Written Report on the Debate

After a Debate ask the students to write a paragraph stating their position on the Debate topic. The students should include in their text four strong points which support their position (reasoning and evidence).

English Vocabulary

- a) Before you start a Debate give the students some new vocabulary which they might use in the argumentation.

Example: *for the subjects concerning the environment topic you might give vocabulary according to age group: recycle, re-use, reduce, sustainable, pollution, waste, protect, to campaign, environmentally friendly, landfill.*

- b) When teaching the method of Debating you might give the students some useful expressions for argumentation, see above Chapter 2, page 28 “Phrase Samples for the Debate.”

Agree or Disagree!

General Considerations:

This activity is a combination of written assignment and verbal reasoning. It is a preparation for learning to build up arguments.

Material needed:

A list of Agree/Disagree – questions for students to tick.

Procedure:

1. Distribute to the students a list of statements with which they can agree or disagree. Ask them to mark their answer.
2. After the students have ticked their favorite answers ask some of them to give reasons for their answer.

Examples for statements for the questionnaire:

- | | |
|---|------------------|
| – A friend in need is a friend in deed. | agree / disagree |
| – Teamwork is more fruitful than working alone. | agree / disagree |
| – Girls and boys should be treated differently. | agree / disagree |

Create statements according to age and interest of the students.

Reflection:

Talk with the students about the importance of giving reasons. For a Debate it is important not just to give opinions.

FREEZE! – Body Language in Debating

General Considerations:

This activity works as an “Ice Breaker”. It concentrates on the expression of feelings in body language. It alternates between high and low energy stages.

Classroom Setting:

As students should move freely in the room, sufficient empty space has to be arranged.

Procedure:

1. The teacher explains the procedure: Everybody will walk without talking crisscrossing the room. The teacher will call out a certain feeling and everybody walks in a way which expresses this feeling. When the teacher says “Freeze!” everybody stands still, frozen from his/her movement he/she just showed in body language. The “frozen picture” of the group stays for some moments before the teacher asks the students to move again and calls out another feeling. The students walk around expressing this feeling by using their body language, till the teacher calls out again: “Freeze!”. The whole procedure goes on.
2. Suggestions for feelings to be called out by the teacher:
 - Friendly greeting each other.
 - Being proud.
 - Being angry.
 - Being curious.
 - Being nervous.
 - Being bored.
 - Being enthusiastic.
 - Being afraid.
 - Being thoughtful.
 - Being assertive.
 - Being the Winner.
3. The Teacher reflects with the group:
 - Was it easy for you? Were there some feelings which are more difficult to express?
 - Do you have an idea how this exercise might connect to Debate?

- The whole range of these feelings could play a role in a Debate. Which feelings we showed in the activity might be helpful in a Debate? Why?

The teacher asks the students to demonstrate in body language all the feelings they find to be supportive in a Debate, one after the other (*for example: friendly, curious, enthusiastic, thoughtful and assertive*).

Variations:

This exercise might work particularly at the beginning of a session. It might be combined with other activities which focus on body language in Debates and/or the voice.

Your Voice is Your Asset⁽¹⁹⁾

General Considerations:

This activity aims at enhancing the students' awareness and courage to use their voice as a tool in Debating. This activity can be done with up to 20 students.

Material needed and Classroom Setting:

- Blackboard and chalk.
- An empty space is needed for lining up the students standing in two rows.

Procedure:

1. The teacher explains: Debate is about arguments. Nevertheless, it is not only necessary to think about the content of a Debate, but also about the way we present our arguments. For this, our voice is very important, it is our asset! Our voice influences the way others listen to us.
2. The teacher demonstrates this by modeling his/her voice accordingly in order to let students feel the difference in voice expression:
"I got a B in an English test!" (in a happy mood)
"I got a B in an English test..." (in a sad mood)
 The teacher emphasizes that different emotions might completely change the meaning of a given sentence.
 Another example:
"I think I will be able to do this!" (in a confident mood)
"I think I will be able to do this..." (in a doubting manner)
3. The teacher points out that if you want to convince somebody:
 - a) You should talk with a clear voice.
 - b) You should lay stress on the important words.
4. Exercise for talking in a clear voice and stressing the important parts of the sentence:
 The teacher asks the students to stand in two rows, both rows face each other so that everybody has a partner.

(19) This activity was inspired by Prof. Dr. Hala Yamani, Bethlehem University.

The teacher explains that this exercise consists only of one sentence, but each time we say it we stress another word. We will see what the effect of this will be.

The sentence is:

“You will sleep tonight in the kitchen.” (*The sentence should be written at the blackboard.*)

The Teacher demonstrates with one student the following procedure:

- The two say the sentence with stress on “YOU will sleep tonight...”
- The two say the sentence with stress on “You WILL sleep tonight...”
- The two say the sentence with stress on “You will SLEEP tonight...”

And so on till the whole sentence is expressed with 7 different intonations. Each pair of students practices this and the others listen to them.

Reflection:

The teacher encourages the students to use intentionally their voice by using its capabilities to give color to the arguments.

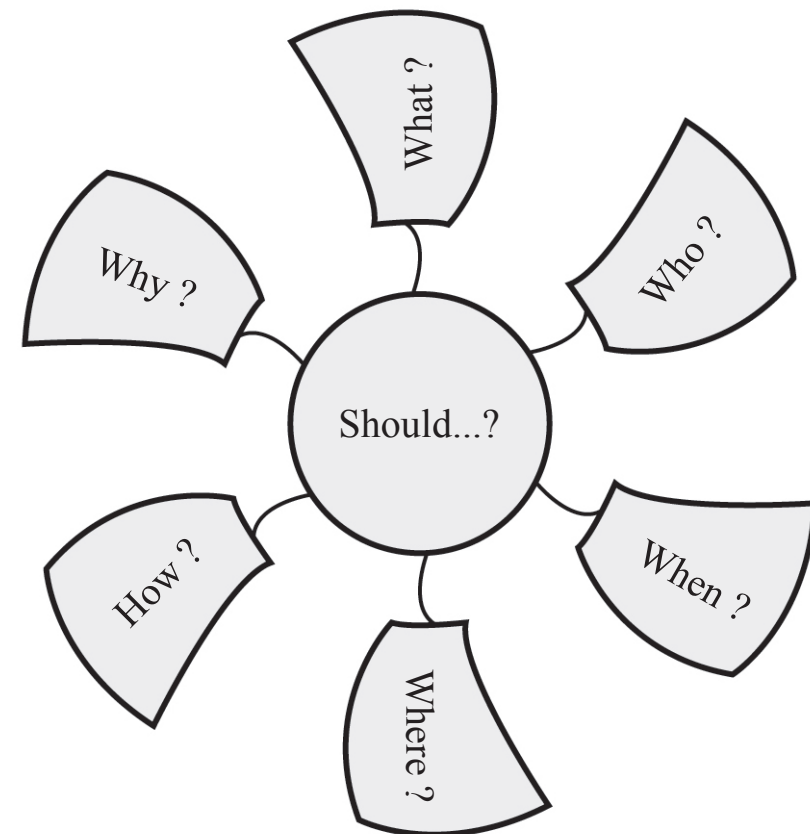
Variations:

In the Debate which might follow this activity a particular feedback might be given to the students concerning the usage of their voice.

WORKSHEETS

Worksheet (1)

The Question Fan



Worksheet (2)

The A-R-E Matrix

	Assertion	Reasoning	Evidence
1	The minimum driving age should be raised to 18.	Raising the driving age will save lives by reducing accidents.	16-year-old drivers have three times as many crashes as drivers aged 18 and 19.
2	Television has a bad influence.	Television shows too much violence.	
3		Eating junk food is bad for your health.	Junk food is high in fat and sugar. Too much fat and sugar puts you at risk for diabetes and heart disease.
4		Allowing younger people to vote would increase their interest in politics and society.	
5			Incidents of school violence have shown that students use their cellular phones to notify police and parents.

Worksheet (3)

Building up Your Arguments⁽²⁰⁾

Name:

Date:

The Task:

Argue pro or against the statement below applying a full argument. To do that you have to:

- 1. State your assertion.
- 2. Give reasons that bolster your assertion.
- 3. Support each reason with a specific example.

The Topic: “Too many cooks spoil the broth – yes or no?”

Your Answer:
.....
.....

(20) For this Worksheet see: englishforeveryone. org

Worksheet (4)

Preparing my Argumentation

What my position is:

Why is this important?

Reason 1:

Reason 2:

Reason 3:

Examples for the importance of this:

Example 1:

Example 2:

Who will benefit from this?

1.

2.

What are the long-term consequences of this?

Worksheet (5)

Counter Arguments – What Might the Others Say?

Think about the arguments of the others. What might they say?

The other team is likely to say:

The weak point in this argument is:

When we compare this argument to ours, ours is stronger because:

Worksheet (6)

Debate Organizer: Reasons and Examples

Reasons:	Data/ Examples:

Worksheet (7)

Debate Organizer

The Arguments of Your Opponents

Anticipate and be prepared to counter the arguments of your opponents.

Opposing Position:	
Argument 1:	But:
Argument 2:	But:
Argument 3:	But:
Argument 4:	But:

Worksheet (8)

Feedback for Observation of Individual Students

Checklist

Knowledge of the Topic

- ☐ knows the facts.
- ☐ knows the problems connected to this topic.

Arguments

- ☐ gives sound reasons.
- ☐ gives evidence (data and/or examples).

Listens and Connects with the opponents

- ☐ listens to the others.
- ☐ connects precisely with the arguments of the others.

Talks Well

- ☐ the voice is clear.
- ☐ eye contact.
- ☐ colourful and memorable expressions.
- ☐ behaves politely.

Working in the Debate team

- ☐ cooperative.

Worksheet (9)

Judging a Debate

Grades: **1: basic** **2: average** **3: good** **4: excellent**

PRO-Position: **CONTRA-Position:**

1. The Opening

- Introduced the position well with a major argument.

2. Free Exchange

- Full arguments with reasoning and evidence.
- Listening and connecting with the arguments of the others.
- Comprehensive and memorable language.
- Clear voice.
- Politeness.

3. Closing Statements

- Closed well with a major argument.

Total points for PRO-Position:

Total points CONTRA-Position:

The winner is:

Worksheet (10)

Debate Competition through Questioning ⁽²¹⁾

DEBATE TOPIC:

.....

Members of the “pro” Group:

.....

Members of the “contra” Group:

.....

You are now members of one of the two Debate teams. Your team will be graded as a whole. This means: You will be as strong as your weakest link. Be sure that you work together so that all members of your team have a good background of the arguments.

Prepare yourselves for the Debate:

1. There will be an opening statement made by your team. This should consist of:
 - Introducing your team members to the audience.
 - Stating your team’s position.
 - Stating your basic argumentation (one strong point of reasoning and one example).

Responsible for introducing the team members:

Responsible for stating the team’s position and basic argumentation:

.....

2. You should have at least 5 questions to ask your opponents. You might write them down on index cards as an easy reference. The questions should be specifically directed to one of your opponents.

Responsible members:

3. You should have answers prepared which you will use to respond to your opponents’ questions. This means, you have to imagine beforehand what questions the other team might have to you.

Responsible members:

4. You should have a final argument as a concluding remark. This argument should already have played a role in the Debate. You might say why you still believe that your position is the stronger one.

Responsible members:

The Winner:

One of the teams will win the Debate! The winning team will have:

- A sound knowledge about the issue.
- Good reasoning to back the assertions.
- Good evidence (data, examples) to convince.
- Good listener.
- Good teamwork among themselves.
- Use a good and creative language.
- Be polite.

(21) Adaptation of: Karen Reynosa’s Debate Rules, http://www.laep.org/uclasp/ISSUES/bringing_water/debate.htm 26.9.2012.

REFERENCES

The following resources give a substantial overview on approaches, formats and methods of Debate and might serve as a springboard to delve deeper into the matter:

- **Frank Hielscher, Ansgar Kemmann, Tim Wagner**, Debattieren unterrichten, Seelze 2010 (Bundeswettbewerb “Jugend debattiert”).
- **IDEA International Debate Education Association**: www.idebate.org.
- **Mel Silberman**, Active Learning. 101 Strategies to Teach Any Subject, Needham Heights, Massachusetts 1996.
- **Middle School Public Debate Program**: www.middleschooldebate.com
BBC: www.bbc.co.uk/schools/studentlife/debate/.