


Using Debate to Teach about
Advocacy and Deliberation

Anand Rao
Pedagogy Colloquia
October 22, 2019

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- Oct 30th 12 – 1 p.m. – Leslie Martin
- “Civic Learning & You: What is civic learning and why might it be relevant for your course”


Don't miss!



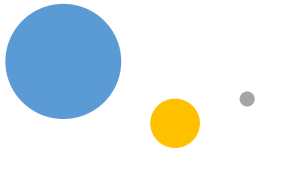
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- Proposals due November 8, 2019

Call for Participation: UMW Advocacy, Deliberation, and Civic Engagement Learning Community



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Using **Debate** to Teach about
Advocacy and Deliberation

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Advocacy
Public support for or recommendation of a particular cause or policy

Deliberation
Long and careful consideration or discussion


Debate
A(n) formal discussion on a particular topic in which opposing arguments are put forward

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A debate includes:

- A resolution, or topic
- Presentation of more than one perspective on that topic
- Ongoing discussion about that topic

What is debate?



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What makes for a *true* debate?

- Development
- Clash
- Extension
- Perspective

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Plan for today:

What does debate have to offer?

- Advocacy
- Critical Thinking
- Perseverance
- Deliberation
- Constructive Controversy
- Argumentativeness vs. Verbal Aggression

What does debate in the classroom look like?

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- Improves communication skills
 - Not just public speaking but also interpersonal (Colbert & Biggers 1985)
- Debaters are “significantly better at employing the three communication skills (analysis, delivery, and organization) than students who have not had debate experience.” (Semlak & Shields 1997)

Advocacy

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- Students with argumentation training “significantly outgained the control students in critical thinking scores”
- Debate > argumentation class > general communication class

Critical Thinking

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- Debate “appears to strengthen students’ ability to persevere. . . Remain focused, and work toward challenging goals. . . Debaters have a heightened capacity to hang in and struggle – often in the face of disappointment and defeat.”
 - Melinda Fine, writing about the NYC UDL

Perseverance

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- Encouraging students to speak in a debate forces them to “confront learners with viewpoints different from their own” and therefore to achieve “an openness to the world and to others”
 - David Carson

Deliberation

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- 90% reported they are concerned about the “uncivil and rude behavior of politicians”
 - (Gtown – April 24, 2019)
- 83% believe that behavior that used to be seen as unacceptable now accepted as normal
 - (Gtown – April 24, 2019)
- 78% think that incivility and political dysfunction prevent our nation from moving forward
 - (Natl Institute for Civil Discourse)

Incivility in political discourse

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- “[C]ontroversy can arouse conceptual conflict, subjective feelings of uncertainty, and epistemic curiosity; increase accuracy of cognitive perspective-taking; promote transitions from one stage of cognitive and moral reasoning to another; increase the quality of problem solving; and increase creativity.”
- BUT to be managed properly, must also promote cooperative learning and intellectual disagreement
 - Johnson and Johnson (1979)

Constructive Controversy

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“Argument involves presenting and defending positions on controversial issues while attacking the position taken by others on the issues. Verbal aggression, on the other hand, denotes attacking the self-concept of another person instead of, or in addition to, the person’s position on a topic of communication.”

- Dominic Infante and Charles Wigley

Argumentativeness vs Verbal Aggression


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Debate gives students greater self esteem and debaters “appear to assign higher value to resolving their conflicts through dialogue rather than force.”

- Melinda Fine

Argumentativeness vs Verbal Aggression

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Assertiveness Training

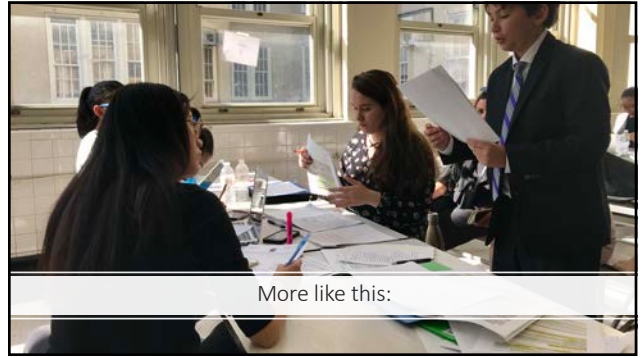
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What does debate in the classroom look like?

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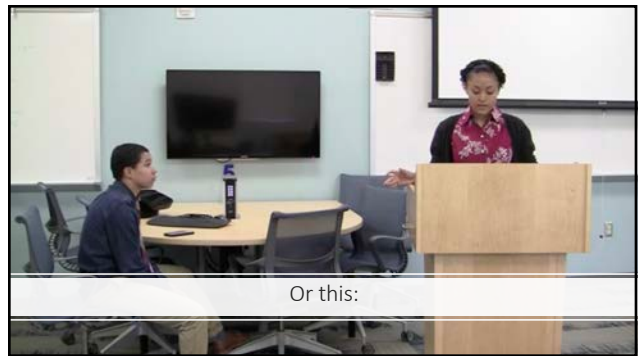
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What makes for a *true* debate?

- Development
- Clash
- Extension
- Perspective

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- 2 minute affirmative
 - 1 minute cross-examination
- 2 minute negative
 - 1 minute cross-examination
- 1 minute affirmative rebuttal
- 1 minute negative rebuttal


Short Debate (approx. 10 minutes)

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- Aff constructive – 7 minutes
 - C-X – 2 minutes
- Neg constructive – 7 minutes
 - C-X – 2 minutes
- Aff rebuttal – 4 minutes
- Neg rebuttal – 4 minutes
- Aff closing statement – 1.5 minutes
- Neg closing statement – 1.5 minutes

• 2 minutes of prep time for each debate


Longer Debate (approx. 30 minutes)



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- Provocative opening statement
- Speakers follow in volunteer order
- Agree or disagree – speak for 2-3 minutes
- Graded on:
 - Basic presentation skills
 - Connection to a previous speech
 - New contribution to the discussion

Impromptu Town Hall Debate




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Fiscal Management Town Hall Advocacy & Decision-making Exercise

Each student will role-play as a key fiscal management stakeholder, advocating on behalf of a given position, and fiscal management decision-maker, reaching a decision on a controversial fiscal management issue.

Participants:
 2 teams of two, each team represents a specific stakeholder
 1 jury of ten decision-makers, representing the key decision maker




Prepared Town Hall Exercise



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Discussion



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