

CAD FORUM

DEBATE AS PEDAGOGY

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Debate pedagogy is both prevalent and elusive. Debate coaches and educators around the country constantly innovate and explore ways to make their teams more competitive, to integrate debate into the classroom, and to expand the scope of debate on their campuses. Despite abundant examples of debate pedagogy, however, practitioners and instructors are often silent about instructional strategies. Many pedagogical initiatives are akin to reinventing the wheel, with each debate coach developing activities that work for them (or for other coaches they have worked under) without a great degree of sharing between debate educators.

This forum is an effort to begin a conversation among debate professionals about pedagogical methods that help raise the stature of all debate education. To that end, this forum serves two purposes. First, it allows for the sharing of a variety of pedagogical methods. Currently, coaches tend to pass their own methods to debaters or graduate assistants. Improvement of teaching techniques, therefore, often results from one's contextual circumstances and not from desire to create or engage with an expansive and comprehensive teaching toolbox. This forum could serve as a model for debate educators to willingly and openly share instructional techniques to improve the activity as a whole.

The second purpose of this forum is to demonstrate

the diversity that exists in debate pedagogy. Debate pedagogy is more expansive than team strategy sessions, argumentation in the debate classroom, or teaching new debaters the finer points of competitive policy debate. All of those are important academic endeavors, but the pieces in this forum demonstrate that debate pedagogy reaches further. Debate pedagogy extends into dozens of communication classrooms, numerous public debates on college campuses and, when done right, into every intercollegiate debate.

In the following pages, we observe a variety of pedagogical approaches. First, William Mosley-Jensen's exercise details how to introduce competitive components of a debate tournament into the college classroom. Mosley-Jensen argues that competition can motivate students to more closely examine important pieces of scholarship and to synthesize key components of a reading or other assignment into argument for an in-class debate. This forum then moves to Jarrod Atchison's exercise suggesting how to incorporate stakeholders in a debate exercise. Atchison expands the traditional notion of switch-side debate by paying attention to audience roles, projected or real, and the stakes they may have in controversy at the center of a debate. The third piece in this forum is Kevin Kuswa's exercise shifting controversy exploration functions of switch-side debate from the competitive format to the classroom through the development of controversy briefs. Kuswa adds a formal structure to in-class debates, encouraging students to research the heart of a given controversy in a manner that promotes a clash of ideas through pre-debate preparation. Finally, Michael Davis and Peter Bsumek explore the possibility of heightening scholarly potential of public debates for undergraduate students. Davis and Bsumek argue that instead of simply asking students to attend public debates as audience members, educators should encourage

students' engagement through the development of written reflections connected to course content.

Ideally, this forum is not a final product, but rather the beginning of sustained discussion among debate coaches and educators leading to the sharing and innovation of pedagogical tools. Students excel when educators encourage them to engage debate pedagogy in a sustained and proactive manner. Debate programs with access to robust and rigorous methods for advocacy and argument development hold great potential for student achievement and competitive success.

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