



Podcast on Debate



Shalom & Hi everyone -welcome to the UnitEd-Herzog Podcast!

We assume you have familiarity with educational ideas such as Collaborative learning, Jigsaw method, Self-directed learning, and Active learning. Sometimes these these methods and techniques seem a little bit vague

UnitEd-Herzog has prepared a series of short and focused podcasts on a number educational approaches. The podcasts are workshops for building lesson plans based on diverse, inviting, and engaging learning practices that encourage students to take an active and meaningful part in their learning. We've also prepared accompanying materials for you and your students that help improve their learning using these practices..

These practices may be adapted to any content and any age group.

So go ahead, take the material you've planned to teach, find a quiet place, put on your headphones, and join us!



Have you seen the news lately? The part where there is a discussion panel and the moderator tries to take control of the debate around the table and neither side listens to the other; neither side really addresses the other side's claims. It's quite sad to see this. But it doesn't have to be this way. Discussions can and should be fascinating and interesting. Each side should state its claims, the other side should try to refute them and state their own claims and, if possible, even convince, if not the other side, then at least the audience.

The concept of debate has been known from the time of ancient Greece, but debate clubs, where a group of students or adults hold debates as a kind of sport, have been known in London from the end of the 17th to the beginning of the 18th centuries.

So, what exactly is a debate? A debate is a structured method of discussion in which two people or groups take opposing views on a certain topic and discuss it. The goal of one group is to present as many arguments as possible in favor of their opinion and try to refute the arguments of the other side. An example of a class debate could be two groups of three students each, discussing if one remote study day should be applied every week. One group will present arguments in favor and the other group will present the counter arguments. The groups will take time to prepare their claims and then the debate will begin. One speaker from each group will come up and present his/her claims and try to refute those that the speaker from the other group presented. At the end of the discussion, the judge or the audience will decide who convinced them more.



Debate requires that the students exercise critical thinking, listening skills and standing in front of an audience. Debate allows students to clarify their positions and see different perspectives. I invite you to stay with us and in this podcast I will show you how to build a debate-based lesson plan. At the end of this session, you will have a lesson ready to use in class. You can also use the page we prepared for you in “Podcast: Template for Building a Debate-Based Lesson Plan.” Let's start.



Are you with us? Great. Are you comfortable? You can put on headphones and prepare a device for documenting the structure of the lesson: it can be a notebook, a sheet of paper, or a computer. I will explain each step and give you time to work while listening to pleasant music. If you feel you need more time, stop the recording, finish your work, and get back to us. First stage – think of a big topic or question that you want to hold the debate on. I suggest dividing the class into groups of 3 to 4 students on each side, so you might want to think about several topics in the same context to diversify the class discussion. The debate can be held in a competitive fashion and then you could consider whether you also want to appoint a judge/s or have the audience judge the debate. You could also hold a debate for the sake of the debate, or you could give your students feedback.

 **Take 3 minutes to think about a topic or question and how you want to pair the students.**



Another point to think about is the format of the debate. I suggest choosing between two main options: one option is to use the debate as a learning and research tool, where the students need to learn a new topic or delve deeper into old areas. For this they must be given a relatively long period of time for learning, such as an entire lesson or more for learning, research and writing their arguments and in a separate concluding lesson for the debate. A second option is to use the debate as an evaluation event for the learning process. In this case, two groups approach the teacher who gives them the topic of debate and then they get 5 minutes to jot down arguments for discussion. The groups then get another 5 minutes, during which each participant in the group writes down his own points and then they are ready to start. This is a much more competitive and intense format.

 **Take 2 minutes to choose which format you want to use.**



Are you with us? Great. Are you comfortable? You can put on headphones and prepare a device for documenting the structure of the lesson: it can be a notebook, a sheet of paper, or a computer. I will explain each step and give you time to work while listening to pleasant music. If you feel you need more time, stop the recording, finish your work, and get back to us.

First stage – think of a big topic or question that you want to hold the debate on. I suggest dividing the class into groups of 3 to 4 students on each side, so you might want to think about several topics in the same context to diversify the class discussion. The debate can be held in a competitive fashion and then you could consider whether you also want to appoint a judge/s or have the audience judge the debate. You could also hold a debate for the sake of the debate, or you could give your students feedback.

 **Take 3 minutes to think about a topic or question and how you want to pair the students.**



Another point to think about is the format of the debate. I suggest choosing between two main options: one option is to use the debate as a learning and research tool, where the students need to learn a new topic or delve deeper into old areas. For this they must be given a relatively long period of time for learning, such as an entire lesson or more for learning, research and writing their arguments and in a separate concluding lesson for the debate. A second option is to use the debate as an evaluation event for the learning process. In this case, two groups approach the teacher who gives them the topic of debate and then they get 5 minutes to jot down arguments for discussion. The groups then get another 5 minutes, during which each participant in the group writes down his own points and then they are ready to start. This is a much more competitive and intense format.

 **Take 2 minutes to choose which format you want to use.**



Now that you have the larger topic, you need to decide how the contestants will receive feedback on the debate – whether the students are the judges or you are going to be the judge. There are important criteria to consider in order to evaluate the quality of the debate, such as: how clear was the main argument, how clear were the examples given to support the main argument, presentation skills, was the other side able to refute the claims, and more. As there is a lot of accumulated experience in the field of debate, I suggest that you use existing tools that already have the criteria and, if necessary, refine them for your class.

 **You might need some more time for this step, so feel free to stop and continue after you have finished selecting the criteria. Take 3 minutes to complete this task.**




Did you prepare the criteria? Great. You have already done most of the work. Now you have to think about the entire process. I will give you a suggestion for the planning process so that you can streamline the proposal to you and your class's needs.

In the first stage, give your class the big topic on which the debate will be held. Explain the concept of a debate to them and how it is going to be conducted. Divide the class into groups for the debate.

Define how much time the groups have to prepare and research the topic. Do you want to allow them a wide range of research materials or do you want to prepare certain sources of information for them? The research stage can be held during class and the debate at the end of the same day, or have it as an ongoing task, leading up to the day of the debate itself, which will be during a separate lesson.

The debate phase is held after the research phase is complete. Remind the students of the debate rules: each speaker presents his opinion in 5 minutes, during which he also responds to his friend's statement. Each student from the opposing group may put up his hand to ask questions and the speaker can decide whether to comment and answer, or not. The last speaker summarizes the whole group's opinions. At the end of the debate, the judges summarize the groups' abilities vs. predetermined criteria, and conclude which of the groups presented the strongest arguments and won the debate.

After explaining the rules, you can start the debate.

 **You may need a few more minutes to focus the messages and process, but beyond that, you have completed the stages and have a debate-based lesson plan. You obviously can continue developing more lessons!**



We hope you found this podcast to be helpful.

Don't forget to also visit the UnitEd and Herzog College websites.

There you will find additional materials about the practice and other useful resources for future lessons, inspiration, and enrichment.

Good luck!

You can also listen to the podcast here:

