
Chris'

Curriculum Guide

It's that time of year again! Many districts have already begun the national qualification process, and I am sure that those of you in districts that have not held a tournament yet are feverishly preparing to fight for a chance to visit Las Vegas in June. However, even as we all prepare for districts, the teaching must continue. Hopefully the ready-to-use ideas from my curriculum guide will help you out during this hectic period. This month, I have only one activity for you, but it is an activity that can be used in speech classes and debate classes of any level. This activity could even be converted to a writing exercise for those of you who teach English or composition classes.

The Point-Counterpoint Speech

When discussing persuasive speaking it is often said that two of the most effective ways to ensure that your audience will be persuaded are refutation and inoculation. Refutation is a concept that is very familiar to those of us involved with debate. It simply means responding to or clashing with the known arguments that are contrary to the point you are trying to make. Inoculation is perhaps a bit more novel. Inoculation is tactic by which a speaker attempts to provide his or her audience with the information necessary to respond to counter arguments they might hear in the future. In that way it is similar to being inoculated against a virus. The point-counterpoint speech affords students the ability to practice both of these persuasion tactics.

Rationale:

Persuasive speaking requires a speaker to do far more than present an argument and hope the audience is convinced. Persuasion is in many ways like a game of chess, our arguments and our words like pawns. Persuasion is psychological. Just as becoming a master chess player requires great practice and the mastery of numerous techniques, becoming a successful orator requires speakers to practice and master a number of strategies. Two important strategies are refutation and inoculation. A speaker must be able to demonstrate to her or his audience the flaws and weaknesses in the common arguments of those who disagree with the message being presented. However, sometimes the opposition is not so well known. In such situations, a talented speaker will offer his audience enough information to successfully combat future attempts at undoing the persuasion. Developing a proficiency for refutation and inoculation will enable students to better defend and support their ideas.

Objectives:

- To offer teachers a means of evaluating skills and techniques associated with persuasive speaking.
- To serve as a post unit activity for persuasive speaking.
- To offer students a chance to practice the skills and techniques associated with effective persuasion.
- To introduce novice debaters to the concepts of refutation and clash.
- To allow advanced debaters a chance to practice the skills developed through debate in a real world format.

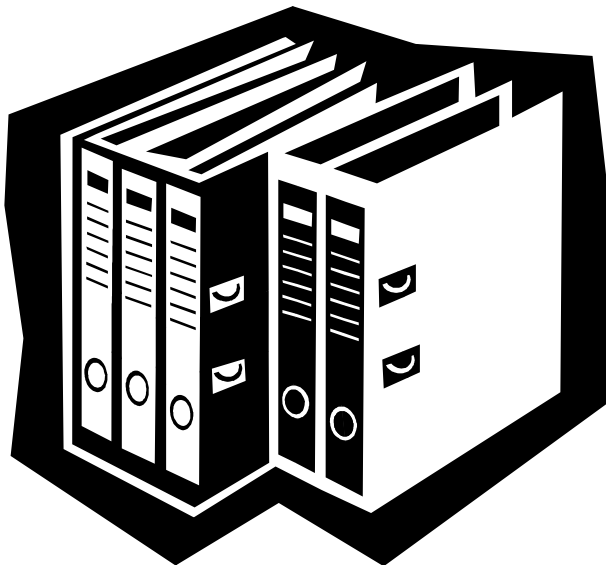
Preparation:

As this activity is designed as a follow-up to a unit on persuasion, the primary element of preparing for this activity is to ensure that your students understand the finer points of persuasion. Once this task is accomplished, preparation for the point-counterpoint speech activity is fairly simple. All you have to do is divide your class into pairs. While this activity works best if you have an even number of students, in the event that you have an odd number of students in your class, the odd person out will have to work on the assignment alone. If you need advice on how to instruct a student working alone, I will be happy to pass that along on an individual basis.

The Assignment:

- To begin this assignment, each pair of students should select a topic. This topic should have equal ground on each side in order to allow for sufficient clash.
- Once students have selected their topics, students will need to determine which side of the issue will be handled by each student and in what order they will speak. For example, if the topic is gun control, which student will speak in favor of gun control and which will speak against it, and who will speak first?
- Each student should then independently research and develop three arguments that support her or his position in the speech. Students can be given time in class or several days outside of class to complete this part of the assignment.
- Once students have completed this stage of the assignment, they should inform their speech partner of the arguments they intend to make during the speech. At this point, students should be given adequate time to research and prepare responses to arguments that will be made by their counterpart.
- Students are now ready to begin preparing their speeches. During their speech each speaker will need to present his or her own arguments as well as respond the arguments of their speech partner. Each speaker should be allowed at least 4 minutes, but no speech should exceed 6 minutes.
- Grading this speech should focus on three factors. First, students should be graded on their delivery. An important aspect of persuasion is connecting with and communicating effectively to an audience. This makes delivery a very important aspect of persuasion. Second, students should be graded on the quality of arguments they present supporting their side of the issue. These arguments should be well researched and supported by strong evidence. Finally, students should be graded on their ability to respond the arguments of their partner. Responses should also be well researched and supported by strong evidence.

For more information on this assignments please contact Chris Joffrion at: cjoffrion@nflonline.org



Good luck at districts everyone!!