

International Entrepreneurship Educator's Programme

Entrepreneurial Learning - Pedagogical Note Series

8. Use of Debate

1. What is Use of Debate?

Debate is used to provide a forum for delivery of argument for and against an issue. It provides a platform for exploring all relevant issues. It also is a vehicle for practicing delivery skills and 'thinking on one's feet'. It has to have audience appeal as the aim is to win their vote but also involve them.

2. How is the exercise constructed?

A debate can be formal or informal. It is relatively easy to construct an issue for argument with a class, get them to consider arguments for or against and then speak to it from the 'floor'. A more formal version is described below.

A debate will have a Motion which the House (those attending) must address. For Example 'This House believes that entrepreneurs are born not made' or 'This House believes that entrepreneurial management can only be fully pursued in the independent business organisation'.

The debate will need:

- **A Chairperson** – who will introduce the Motion and the Proposers, Opposers and 'Summers up'. Also to set out the rules of the game, the time limits and how he/she will enforce these and how the audience should contribute. Also explain the vote and how this will be for the best arguments best delivered not the audience's personal prejudice! If
- **A Proposer**: - to put up all the major positive arguments for the Motion. Maximum 7 minutes
- **An Opposer**: -to put all the main arguments against the Motion – 7 minutes
- **A Seconder for the Motion**: - to counter the arguments of the Opposer as they have been anticipated and as they occur in reality. Also to back up and add arguments to those of the Proposer – 5 minutes
- **A Seconder against the Motion** - to counter all the arguments of the Proposer and Seconder for the Motion as they have been anticipated and as they occur in practice and to back up the opposition arguments – 5 minutes
- **A Summariser for the Motion** – to wind up the debate after the audience has contributed, using audience contributions and emphatically invite it to support the Motion - 5 minutes
- **A Summariser against the Motion** - to wind up the debate after the audience has contributed, using audience contributions and emphatically invite it to oppose the Motion- 5 minutes
- **Speakers from the floor** to think of their own views and articulate them. Speakers do not ask questions but make points and arguments. They may of course take up what has been said by the speakers. *In a small audience it should be emphasized that every member has to contribute.*

ALL SPEAKERS SHOULD NOT READ FROM NOTES BUT SHOULD ADDRESS THE AUDIENCE WARMLY AND CONVINCINGLY AND SHOULD USE HUMOUR SUFFICIENTLY TO ENTERTAIN.

The sequence is as follows.

- Chairpersons Introduction of Motion, Speakers and Rules
- First Speaker for the Motion
- First Speaker against the Motion
- Secunder for the Motion
- Secunder against the Motion
- Floor opened to the audience
- Final Summary for the motion
- Final Summary against
- Vote by the audience
- Concluding remarks by the Chair

To engage all the participants in the debate it can be organized as follows:

- Divide the class into 6 groups
- Group 1 has to agree the main points for the Motion make suggestions as to innovative/entertaining arguments and choose a speaker
- Group 2 has to agree the major points against the Motion, make suggestions for innovative/entertaining arguments and choose a speaker
- Group 3 has to brainstorm on the arguments that might be put by the opposition, think of counterpoints and ways of refuting them entertainingly and subsidiary points to reinforce the Motion. They then choose a speaker to second the Motion.
- Group 4 has to brainstorm on the arguments that might be presented by the proposers of the Motion and also how the points against might be attacked and choose a speaker to second the opposition to the Motion.
- Group 5 has to brainstorm on what they think will be the main points for and against (including any possible points from the floor). They then prepare an outline summary of the argument for supporting the motion and refuting the opposition. They then choose a speaker who has however to be prepared to build flexibly upon what goes on in the debate
- Group 6 goes through the same procedure as Group 5 except that prepare an outline summary of the arguments for opposing the Motion and refuting proposition arguments. They then choose a speaker who has however to be prepared to build flexibly upon what goes on in the debate.

3. Relevance to Entrepreneurial Learning

The ability to think and speak on one's feet is tested and in particular the ability to have empathy with the alternative point of view. Also to be tested is the capacity to argue and present a case in a flexible and innovative manner. It is also a vehicle for exploring key issues in entrepreneurship development. It creates group cohesion, bonding and fun.

4. Outcomes

Major outcomes to be targeted are the airing of key issues in entrepreneurship development via an innovative format. Participants can also apply their more formal learning in a flexible and demanding context. Building a team spirit is also a key component.