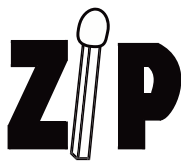# Untangling Debate

Loosening the Tension Between
Non-formal and Formal Education

ZIP

UNTANGLING DEBATE

Loosening the Tension Between Formal and Non-formal Education

Edited by
ANJA ŠERC

МЛАДИНСКИ
ОБРАЗОВЕН
ФОРУМ
YOUTH
EDUCATIONAL
FORUM

Hrvatsko
Debatno
Društvo

ARGO
Debate

Ljubljana
September 2013

Table of Contents

FOR A CULTURE OF DIALOGUE: ESSAYS FROM THE FIELD

PRACTICING HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION AND EDUCATION FOR
DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP THROUGH DEBATE: AIDS AND EXERCISES

Exercises in Critical Thinking:

APPENDICES

Preface

The manual 'Untangling Debate – Loosening the Tension Between Formal and Non-formal Education' is the final publication based on contributions of young people in four European partner organizations involved in the project 'Let's Discuss Debate! Bridging the Non-formal – Formal Education Divide'. We are extremely grateful for the financial support of the European Youth Foundation, a fund established in 1972 by the Council of Europe to provide financial support for European youth activities. Without this support, our ideas would not see the light of day. The project was managed and coordinated by the Slovenian debate organization Za in proti, Zavod za kulturo dialoga, a non-formal youth education organization that aims to equip young people with tools and values of critical dialogue and active citizenship. It has long been the mission of the organization to contribute to the discussion on new paradigms in education and therewith establish its role as a valuable partner in the process of readjusting the needs of the school curriculum to the changing global environment. We undertook the journey of this project with three partner organizations that share the same commitments and values – Youth Educational Forum Macedonia; Croatian Debate Society HDD, and Romanian Association for Thinking and Oratory ARGO.

The four partner organizations share the mission of defending the culture of dialogue, but differ in their strategic approaches. They also have a different organizational set-up and have been established at different points in recent history. Nevertheless, we reached an agreement on where we see debate communities in the years to come, namely side by side with the national school curricula developers and as trustworthy partners in the dialogue on the future of educational systems across Europe.

The foundations of the publication in front of you are built on our strong conviction that the methodology of formal debate has a lot to offer to the educational paradigm known under the syntax *education for democratic citizenship and human rights*. In this publication, we singled out three most important traits of the methodology in question – critical thinking, active citizenship, and understanding the other. We set out to offer to a wider audience of educators a *systematic overview of the pros and cons of the*

methodology, an overview of its possible uses in the classroom (and broader), and practical tips and tools for using debate in the context of education for democratic citizenship and human rights.

As you browse through the manual you will stumble upon many different aspects of what we believe every educator should be aware of when adopting the methodology of formal debate either in the formal or in the non-formal education realm. In the first chapter, you will gain an overview on the role of formal debate in enhancing the values and skills of democratic citizenship and human rights education. You will be guided through this maze by insights of four young educators that interpreted the results of the international survey based on their knowledge and insights of the educators. Next, you will browse through essays by prominent European opinion leader on the importance of defending the culture of dialogue in contemporary public space. The last chapters will offer you a guide to a hands-on approach for getting started with the methodology of debate in your own work – be that in the classroom or in the non-formal education setting aiming to raise the awareness about active citizenship and human rights. We are convinced that the combination of exercises, motions and topical insights will provide you with a good starting point to dive into the world of debate.

On behalf of the project team I wish you a good read and a lot of perseverance in your work.

Anja Šerc, M.Sc.
editor of the publication

INTRODUCTION

We Wanted to Measure, So We Did…

Anja Šerc, M.Sc.
Freelance NGO Consultant

Introduction to the Partnership

Debate has a long and established tradition as a method of teaching the skills of public speaking and critical thinking. Recently, it has also become understood as a method of motivating and equipping students with the values and skills of active citizenship. As a group of young critical individuals with a track record of intense involvement in national and international activities of the global debate community, we firmly believe that debate brings significant advantages to the young people involved in it. To what extent it actually impacts young people with the values it promotes and how we might measure this was the question we set out to answer in the project 'Let's discuss debate'.

Three young associates of ZiP form the core of the project team in Slovenia – a student, a high school professor, and a consultant. We embarked on the mission to form an international partnership researching the impacts of debate in the region. The four countries that joined the partnership have for years been **partners in various international projects, they share the commitment to promote debate,** and **believe that debate should find its way in the national curricula due to its positive effects on young individuals.** The partnership involves young people from the Croatian Debating Society (CDS), Romanian Association for Thought and Oratory (ARGO), Macedonian Youth Education Forum (YEF) and Slovenian Pro et Contra – Institute for Culture in Dialogue (ZiP). From this common ground, the project 'Let's discuss debate' was born.

Introduction to the Survey

The aim of the project was to analyze the effects of debate on a sample that would show relevant results and would serve as a solid starting point for future research of the impact of debate methodology on promoting the values and skills of democratic citizenship and education for human rights. We set out to

make a study on a sample of 800 young people in the four partner countries. The sample was comprised of 50% of respondents that have been involved in debate for more than a year and 50% of respondents that have not been involved in debate at all, or, debaters involved in debate for less than a year. With this composition of the sample we aimed to measure relevant differences between the two groups, since our initial assumption was that at least a year of involvement in debate is necessary to start measuring the impacts of the methodology.[1] Like learning any other skill, debate requires time and practice.

Sample statistics

Country	Gender			Age Group	
	Male	*Female*	*Other*	*14-15*	*16-18*
Croatia	104	150	4		
debaters	48	76	0	44	202
non-debaters	56	74	4		
Slovenia	109	162	7		
debaters	36	42	1	65	144
non-debaters	73	120	6		
Macedonia	101	167	0		
debaters	52	80	0	81	186
non-debaters	49	87	0		
Romania	110	114	0		
debaters	70	68	0	28	196
non-debaters	40	46	0		
Group	424	593	11		
debaters	206	266	1	218	728
non-debaters	398	327	10		

---

[1] In the first year of involvement in the debate the students gain: understanding of the basics of the debate format; understanding of the basics of argumentation theory and logic; involvement in the activities of the debate clubs.

The research questions we set out explore and that guided the preparation of the questionnaire were:[2]

METHODOLOGY OF DEBATE POSITIVELY AFFECTS THE DEVELOPMENT OF SKILLS AND VALUES OF EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP AND THE HUMAN RIGHTS PARADIGM[3]

I. *Inclusion in the debate program has a positive impact on critical thinking skills*

In order to measure the impact of debate methodology on critical thinking skills we used the *Watson-Glaser Practice Test,* which has been used in the past to measure the impact of debate methodology on critical thinking skills.[4] The test is used to measure how the examinees are able to recognize assumptions and separate facts from opinion; how they evaluate arguments; and how they draw conclusions and decide their course of action. The elements of critical thinking are promoted through debate by at least four processes: i) building arguments in support of a motion (or against it); ii) engaging in the arguments made by the opponents (negating and identifying logical fallacies); iii) selecting and evaluating evidence (importance and logic); and iv) drawing conclusions. The connection between the two was tested by including the test in the questionnaire as well as through the interviews with debate mentors. The results were compared across the four partner countries.

II. *Inclusion in the debate program has a positive impact on the process of socialization in active citizenship*

Based on the content analysis of the various documents dealing with democratic citizenship education, human rights education, and promotion of active citizenship, we identified three main areas of research we believe significantly improve when students are involved in debate. We assumed that, based on the selection of topics that students debate at debate competitions, debate clubs, and other debate educational events, their interest in (current)

---

[2] The English version of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix II.

[3] For a more elaborated explanation of the methodological approaches used see Appendix I.

[4] R. Akerman and I. Neale, *Debating the Evidence: An International Review of Current Situation and Perceptions* (2011), at 9.

social, economic, and political issues as well as their knowledge about those issues significantly improve.[5] Additionally, we wanted to analyze in which ways we could understand the improvement of their civic and communication skills. We measured this through a selection of 9 statements and asked them to self-assess to which extent they agree those statements hold true for them (e.g. *I regularly engage in constructive criticism of the state*; *I represent my opinions in a self-confident way*). The link from self-assessment in terms of knowledge and skills to concrete actions was measured with a series of three groups of questions addressing their actual involvement in public life (online activism, local activism, and classic forms of political participation). Our assumption was that the methodology of debate itself, combined with the work of debate organizations, should show statistically relevant differences between the two groups.

III.   *Empathy and understanding the other*

The third assumption we set out to explore was to what extent the methodology of debate impacts empathy and understanding of the other. The specificity of the debate program is that it requires debaters to argue not only for a position that they support but also for positions that are contrary to their beliefs. This might cause the effect that debaters become more tolerant than non-debaters towards people with opinions opposite to theirs since they should have a higher level of understanding how people come to form opposite opinions. To test this, we created an instrument intended to measure the desired effect of debate. We created two groups of ten statements, one concerning general issues (e.g.. *animal rights*) and the other concerning one's personal opinion of oneself (e.g *I have good leadership skills*). Based on the choices they made in the first part, the students were asked to assess a person with the opposite opinion from theirs in terms of personal characteristic of that person and social distance to the person.

What follows, is an overview and an attempt at explaining the main findings on the differences between debaters and non-debaters in the four partner countries. The presentation involves **an overview of the educational guidelines**

---

[5] For some examples of debate topics from various tournaments, debate education events and work in the debate clubs related to the topics of democratic citizenship and human rights education see page 133).

of democratic citizenship and education for human rights in the school curricula, basic overview of the national debate organizations, presentation of research samples, and an analysis of the results. We interpreted the results of the questionnaire analysis through content analysis of the structure and mission of the debate programs coupled with qualitative teacher interview analysis.

We analyzed the survey data using IBM SPSS 20.0 software. The methods used to analyze the differences between debaters and non-debaters were based on ANOVA. This statistical method determines the odds of the difference in means happening by chance or due to the intervention of a certain variable. The commonly accepted odd value for the difference to be considered statistically and scientifically significant (meaning that it did not occur by chance) is 0,05 or 5%. The variable we were exploring was the debate program. Hence, when discussing significant differences in a certain variable in our survey, we mean that the differences in our results in questionnaire variables did not occur by chance but are rather related to the involvement in the debate program.

We also wanted to make sure that the differences in the results were not caused by other variables that are usually connected to results in similar types of surveys (e.g., gender, age, social status, level of the parents' education). To achieve this, we additionally calculated the correlations between these variables and the variables in the questionnaire. We partialized these correlations out to make sure that our significant differences occurred due to the debate program variable and not due to these variables.

LET'S DISCUSS DEBATE:
STATE OF THE ART IN PARTNER COUNTRIES

Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education in Slovenia – Where We Stand and Where We Are Headed

Anja Šerc, M.Sc.

Introduction

Although Slovenia prides itself on the promotion of education for democratic citizenship and human rights education (*EDC/HRE*), no shared working definition of it exists up to date (Implementation of the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education 2012: 15–23). The report shows, that Slovenia belongs to the minority of countries where a common working definition of EDC/HRE is yet to be developed and hence falls in the group of Belarus, Belgium (Flemish Community), Greece, Moldova, Monaco, Poland, Portugal, and Slovakia. The same report, however, also states that Slovenia – along with Montenegro, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, and the UK – extensively promotes EDC/HRE.

Under the search term EDC/HRE in the Slovenian language one finds little evidence of a clear strategy for the development and implementation of principles, skills, and values of this paradigm in the national curricula. One can, however, find ample research, strategies, and examples of good practices when talking about citizenship education, education for global citizenship and education for human rights.[6]

---

[6] According to K. Dürr *et al* ('Strategies for Learning Democratic Citizenship', (2000) *Project on Education for Democratic Citizenship*, at 34), we must understand education for democratic citizenship as the crossroad of citizenship education, intercultural education, global education, peace education, and education for human rights. Education for democratic citizenship is understood at the same time as one of the approaches to the changing role of education as a response to the changes in society, science and technology, and as the basis for all other innovative approaches. We followed this definition with the aim of uncovering which angels of the broad definition of democratic citizenship are present in Slovenia.

Citizenship Education

Citizenship education in Slovenia is implemented in the national curricula at different levels of education, as well as nurtured as an integral part of the educational culture.[7] In the school curricula, it is present either in the form of stand-alone subject, its elements are integrated in other school subjects, and it also exists as a cross-curricula approach. Examples of citizenship education in the formal education system at various levels include:

- at the lower primary education level (ISCED 1), the elements of democratic citizenship education are integrated in the Slovene language classes, foreign language, environmental education, social sciences, history, geography;
- at the upper primary education level (ISCED 2), the elements of democratic citizenship education are integrated in the Slovene language classes, geography, history, foreign language, and elective subjects;
- at the secondary education level (ISCED 3), the elements of democratic citizenship are integrated in Slovene language curricula, foreign language curricula, sociology, geography, and history;
- at the lower secondary education level 'Citizenship Education and Ethics' and the elective subject 'Citizenship Culture' are taught as separate subjects (this is the only instance of citizenship education having specified time in the school curricula);
- at the upper secondary education level, citizenship culture is present as cross-curricular compulsory elective content (provided outside the formal timetable as activity days, field trips, and other methods);
- Slovenia in one of the countries that implements the Eco-Schools program that aims to raise students' awareness of sustainable development issues and encourage them to take on an active role in determining and implementing programs that contribute to their schools' environmentally friendly impact (similar programs run in Bulgaria, Latvia, Hungary, Portugal, Slovenia and Iceland);

---

[7] See EACEA, *Citizenship Education in Europe* (2012), at 59-71. Available at *www.eacea.ec.europa.eu/ education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/139EN.pdf*.

- other examples of integrating citizenship education in the system of formal education include: strong parents' involvement in school life; presence of school parliaments; assessment guidelines for teachers measuring the impact of citizenship education on students.

Between 2010 and 2011 a research project 'Citizenship Education for the Multicultural and Globalised World' was carried out. The main finding was that citizenship education does not sufficiently address 'the general social and political environment or the issues that present the main challenges in the 21st century' and that 'teachers did not have sufficient skills'. New content and new teaching materials were proposed as a result of the research.[8]

Education for Sustainable Development

Education for sustainable development can be considered as one of the elements promoting democratic citizenship since it addresses the interconnected areas of environment, economy, society, and the role of the individual in achieving sustainable development in the future. The area of sustainable development gained recognition in the formal education system especially due to the promotion of its principles by the United Nations. The foundation for its implementation in the formal school curricula was established with the adoption of the Strategy for sustainable development UNECE in 2005 in Vilnius.

On the basis of this Strategy, the Slovenian Ministry of Education and Sport prepared and adopted 'Guidelines for Education for Sustainable Development from Pre-school to University', which were developed cross-sectorally and included representatives of relevant Ministries, governmental offices, NGOs, and civil society representatives. The main themes of these educational guidelines include citizenship, peace, ethics, responsibility, democracy, fairness, safety, human rights, reduction of poverty, health, gender equality, cultural diversity, urban and rural development, economy, consumption patterns,

[8] *Ibid.*, at 83.

shared responsibility, environmental protection, natural resources management, and biodiversity.[9]

Education for sustainable development is not implemented in the formal educational system either as a separate subject or as an extracurricular activity. While recommendations have been adopted on the integration of the topics in different school subjects, this is yet to happen on a relevant scale. Lack of clear operational goals and implementation in the formal school curricula present some of the main obstacles on the road to changing the patterns of behaviour and attitudes towards a more sustainable development.[10]

Examples of good practices promoting the values of sustainable development include projects such as Eko šole (Eco Schools), Zdrave šole (Healthy schools), ASPnet šole (Unesco), and the R.A.V.E. SPACE project.

Education for Human Rights

Promotion of education for human rights is high on the list of priorities of the culture of human rights promotion in Slovenia. As stated on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Slovenia firmly believes that human rights education 'represents a foundation for the respect of human rights'. Together with six other countries in the Platform for Human Rights Education of the UN, Slovenia led the initiative for the adoption of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (2011) and acts as a promoter of the implementation of the World Program for Human Rights Education.[11]

During the OSCE presidency in 2005, Slovenia implemented a pilot project 'Our Rights', which was funded by the Slovene, US, and Finnish governments. Since 2005, the project methodology gained international recognition as a successful

---

[9] Ministry of Education and Sport, *Vzgoja in izobraževanje za trajnostni razvoj* (2013). Available at *www.mizs.gov.si/si/delovna_podrocja/urad_za_razvoj_izobrazevanja/vzgoja_in_izobrazevanje_za_traj nostni_razvoj/*.

[10] S. Sedmak in J. Erčulj, 'Pomen trajnostnega razvoja v učnih načrtih', in S. Sedmak (ed.) *Danes za jutri: Razmišljanja o vzgoji in izobraževanju za trajnostni razvoj* (2009), 57 at 57-69.

[11] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Človekove pravice* (2012). Available at *www.mzz.gov.si/si/zunanja_ politika_in_mednarodno_pravo/zunanja_politika/clovekove_pravice/*.

tool for human rights education. The project has been implemented in more than 17 countries and the educational materials have been translated in 19 languages. The project methodology was initiated and designed by a group of Slovene experts and was developed in a multi-disciplinary group which included numerous OSCE representatives, NGO's, experts, ombudsmen, regional divisions of international organizations, and other stakeholders.[12]

Are Our Students Ready to Face the World?

The abundance of planned as well as implemented projects and school subjects covering three angles of democratic citizenship education would lead one to believe that our students are ready to take on the role of active citizens and to assume a stand on global issues, human rights violations, and sustainable development. Yet the truth lies somewhere in between. The youth still does not take on an active role, does not want to be exposed, or defend its opinion in the public. Lack of trust in democratic institutions has taken on almost epic proportions. Skrt and Snider point out that the concepts of citizenship and education as we once understood them are becoming outdated and redundant due to drastic undergoing social changes.[13] New approaches need to be invented, lived, and constantly adjusted if the process of education is to catch up to the speed of changes in the economy and technology.[14]

Their recommendations include autonomous and critical thinking as well as the readiness to assume responsibility for one's own actions. These traits are just two among a broad specter of recommendations that Council of Europe sets out to promote with the Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights. How to include those skills and values in the school curricula

---

[12] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Projekt izobraževanja 'Naše pravice'* (2012). Available at *www.mzz.gov.si/si/zunanja_politika_in_mednarodno_pravo/zunanja_politika/clovekove_pravice/proje kt_izobrazevanja_nase_pravice/*.

[13] In M. Žvokelj, *Izvajanje projekta Izobraževanje za demokratično državljanstvo v osnovni šoli ter možnosti izvajanja v osnovni šoli z nižjim izobrazbenim standardom* (2012), at 7. Available at *http://pefprints.pef.uni-lj.si/669/1/Magistrska_naloga_Mojca_%C5%BDvokelj.pdf*.

[14] *Ibid*.

and in the broader area of non-formal and informal education remains to be answered.

Below, we start with an introduction to the work of the Slovene national debate organization and proceed with the analysis of the impact of debate methodology on socialization in the human rights and democratic citizenship paradigm.

We set out to answer whether debate methodology contributes to the socialization in democratic citizenship and the culture of human rights. As a community, we need to soon find answers and tools if we are to live in a world where those words still carry meaning and a promise of a free society.

THE ORGANIZATION:
Pro et Contra, Institute for Culture in Dialogue

Slovenian debate organization Za in proti, Zavod za kulturo dialoga (*Pro et Contra, Institute for Culture in Dialogue,* ZiP) is a non-governmental, non-profit organization established in 1998 with the aim to:

- coordinate the debate program in Slovenia on primary school, secondary school and University level;
- educate about debate and critical thinking;
- encourage the dialogue on current affairs and;
- promote active citizenship among the youth.

Debate was introduced in Slovenia as one of the programs of the Open Society Institute in 1996 and after two years it got institutionalized as ZiP. Since then, it has steadily evolved into an organization with a renowned national as well as international reputation and presence. Today, the organization facilitates 50 debate clubs with around 1000 young people involved in the program annually. It has also evolved into an important educational partner at the global level. Slovene debate coaches travel around the world, from Venezuela to Qatar and China to teach debate, principles of sustainable organizational structure, and argumentation.

ZiP's mission statement reads as follows:

'We believe that the individual that will shape a better world is:
- *an individual that is informed and critical;*
- *an individual that possess the skills to present and defend his or her opinion in a persuasive, clear, and logical manner;*
- *an individual that listens and understands arguments completely different to his/her own and is able to engage in dialogue with people holding different opinions;*
- *an individual that with his/her passion actively participates in public life at the local as well as other levels.*

With our activities, we aim to contribute to a higher level of the culture of dialogue in Slovenia and increase active participation of the youth'.

The organization is led by the director, Bojana Skrt, an internationally renowned expert on debate and organizational knowledge about coordinating and implementing debate in local environments. She works closely with a team of co-workers in determining the strategy of the organization. She coordinates national and international projects and is actively involved in preparing debaters for international competitions (World Schools Debating Championships and other international tournaments).

The organizational structure is diverse and was developed with the aim to build a self-sustainable non-governmental organization that benefits from national coordination but can also be self-sufficient with regard to the core of its activity – development and implementation of debate at the local level. Besides the director, there is only one other full time employee. Additionally, the organization relies on the work of 5 part time associates, 15 trainers, and 80 mentors of debate clubs and 40 volunteers. The majority of the staff is recruited from the pool of debaters in debate clubs (except teacher and professor mentors). ZiP associates stem from a group of young people involved in ZiP activities. They later become volunteers and with time assume responsibility for different tasks in organizing activities. All trainers and volunteers are younger than 30, which also holds true for almost half of the debate coaches. Additionally, ZiP prides on the alumni group who regularly serve as consultants or experts on different projects.

The implementation of the debate program in Slovenia at the local level relies on the work of 80 primary school teachers and secondary school professors. In the last years, a steady increase in University students taking on the role of

debate mentors took place. While these students represent the majority of judges at national and regional debate tournaments, they are still a minority among all debate *mentors*. Professor and teacher mentors are recruited through ZiP-organized debate seminars, where participants acquire a basic insight into the debate format, techniques to be used for teaching debate in the classroom, and the basics of argumentation. The work of debate mentors and judges in Slovenia is voluntary and in the majority of cases not paid.

The debate community in Slovenia follows the rules and guidelines of the World Schools Debate format. This format was adopted almost a decade ago as a substitute for the Karl Popper (KP) debate format. The format was changed due to a widespread belief that the Slovene debate community had outgrown the rules of the KP format and wanted to join the international debate community around the World Schools Debating Championship.

ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

The Sample

In Slovenia, we collected the data via an online questionnaire promoted in partnership with debate mentors. Debate mentors distributed the questionnaire in their debate clubs as well as among non-debater students. Additionally, we distributed printed versions of the questionnaire at the national debate tournament. The interviews with debate mentors/teachers were conducted by a sociology professor that has been active in the work of ZiP for the last 6 years. Two interviews were conducted live, three respondents answered by email.

The student sample, which serves to prove the existence of statistically relevant differences between the two groups, is:

- 280 respondents, with **200 non-debaters** and **80 debaters** (students that have been involved in debate for more than a year)
- 162 female respondents, 112 male and 6 other
- the age structure was: 65 respondents aged between 14-16 year, 145 aged between 16-18 year and 70 respondents above 18 years of age.

The debate mentors sample (teachers and professors), which serves to further elaborate on the differences between the two groups, is composed of:

- **Respondent 1 – written responses**: female, foreign language professor, involved in debate for 15 years (high school debate coach, judge at national and international tournaments, lecturer, debate tournament host, uses debate in the classroom);
- **Respondent 2 – written responses**: male, philosophy professor, involved in debate for 8 years (high school debate coach, judge at national and international tournaments, lecturer, debate tournament host, uses debate in the classroom);
- **Respondent 3 – live interview**: male, geography and history teacher, involved in debate for 9 years (high school debate coach, judge at national and international debate tournaments, lecturer, debate tournament host, uses debate in the classroom);
- **Respondent 4 – live interview**: female, foreign language teacher, involved in debate for 8 years (middle school debate coach, judge, debate tournament host, does not use debate in the classroom);
- **Respondent 5 – written responses**: male, English and sociology teacher, involved in debate for 16 years (high school debate coach, judge at national and international tournaments, lecturer, debate tournament host, uses elements of debate in the classroom).

Slovenian Debaters – the Case for Debate

CRITICAL THINKING – WHAT DID YOUR DEBATE MENTOR TEACH YOU ABOUT LOGICAL FALLACIES AND ARGUMENTATION?

The Watson-Glaser test II measures the cognitive abilities that underlie critical thinking skills through measuring how interviewees recognize assumptions, how they evaluate arguments, and how they draw conclusions to plan their course of action. Because at the time of writing there was no available data with demographically similar and statistically relevant sample to compare the scores with, we decided to measure statistically relevant differences between the group of debater and non-debaters.

Researching the impact of debate on critical thinking through a measurement tool was a first attempt of the kind in Slovenia.[15] We believe an important part of the results is also a discussion on and an understanding of what kinds of critical thinking debate does not teach, as well as the beginning of a discussion on the ways this could be a) improved, and/or b) measured in the future. We believe that results demonstrate that we need to do both.

The approach to measuring revealed that we are struggling to find a definition of what we believe critical thinking in debate actually means in relation to the various definitions of critical thinking out there. Moreover, it is quite clear that as a community we are not on the same page with regard to the definition. The argument about the elusiveness of the critical thinking concept is not an attempt of constructing an excuse for relatively little difference between the group of debaters and non-debaters in Slovenia in comparison to the group average, but rather an attempt at defining what we as a community are actually promoting.

The debate program in Slovenia offers different ways for young people, as well as teachers, to familiarize themselves with knowledge about argumentation and critical thinking. All our debate workshops in primary and secondary school include a time slot dedicated to argumentation (building arguments, detecting logical fallacies, and an explanation of refutation strategies). Debate as an extracurricular activity is primarily taught by professor and teachers who usually undergo a 2-day training led by ZiP associates before they start debate clubs. The majority of other debate workshops in schools are led by students, who themselves have gone through a process of debate trainings. Debaters have a chance to further expand their horizons and broaden their knowledge about debate argumentation at summer and/or winter (international) debate trainings and practice their skills at debate tournaments.[16]

---

[15] We faced a serious logistical problem while collecting the interviews. The initial agreement to put a time limit on the first part of the questionnaire was not set and that might have had damaging effects on the results. However, since both groups participated under the same conditions we decided to accept the validity, but still believe this is an important issue to consider when doing further research with the same test.

[16] When we asked the teachers and mentors what they believe are the best ways to motivate students to debate the answer with two of them was that definitely debate competitions and

The aim of different exercises, trainings, and debate itself is to equip students with the tools to make them critical observes and readers of different types of information by understanding the basics of inductive and deductive reasoning, recognition of logical fallacies, and for focusing special attention on the use of evidence. The interviewed teachers listed the following exercises and aspects of critical thinking methodology in their work with debaters: *analysis of topics based on everyday situations* (R1), *detecting logical fallacies, creating sound arguments* (R2), *brainstorming, simulation, group work* (R3), *impromptu debate* (R4), and *a mix of micro debates, extemporary speeches, brainstorming* (R5).[17]

Watson – Glaser Categories	Group	Slovenia
Drawing inference	O	O
Recognizing assumptions	Y	Y
Deductive reasoning	Y	O
Logical interpretation	Y	O
Argument evaluation	O	O

When asked about what effects they, as debate mentors and educators, observe with the implementation of debate techniques and teaching debate, the answered varied. All answers, however, had the same underlying theme – debate has a significant contribution on the development of critical thinking skills, but not all of them can be directly related to the definition of critical thinking as measured by the Watson Glaser test:

-   **R1**: learn not to blindly believe one source; knowledge on how to support an opinion;
-   **R2**: a slight increase in the ability to recognize and name argumentation tricks (the debaters are '*a bit more skeptical and a bit less naïve*');

---

multiple day debate trainings. As was revealed by R3 implementing longer processes, like group brainstorming or following through a whole debate in the regular format cannot be accommodated during regular school hours, because there is no culture with the students of staying long after the classes finish.

[17] For an overview of various debate exercises to enhance critical thinking with students see pages 113-32.

- **R3**: increase in analytical skills, synthesis, broader perspective about a problem;
- **R4**: quality of questions they ask increases, they are more organized.

The only respondent mentioning argumentation techniques and naming arguments was a philosophy professor that is also one of ZiP's long time lecturers at various seminars and trainings for NGO workers, educators, and debaters.

The analysis of the results showed that both debaters and non-debaters score relatively low according to the Watson-Glaser test. In cases of severe information overload, analysis of different pieces of information and making judgment calls about the importance and relevance of this information is more crucial than ever before. We need to make an effort as a community to put more emphasis on teaching and developing tools that will make it easier for the students to engage with the information they are given and become critical readers and listeners.

You're Active, I'm Active, We're All Active

The buzz around active citizenship has been present for quite some time now. Governments, ministries, international organizations, and NGOs are all trying to figure out the magic formula for motivating young people to participate in public life. The definition of an active citizen promoted at the European level derives from the 'conception of citizenship, which extends to citizens' participation in the political, social and civil life of society, (and) is based on respect for a common set of values at the heart of democratic societies /.../'.[18]

We singled out three main factors of democratic citizenship education through which we could better understand how debate methodology contributes to the goals and promotion of the democratic/active citizenship values:

- knowledge of current affairs;
- skills of political participation;
- actual engagement in public life.

---

[18] Hoskins *et al* in EACEA, *supra* note 6, at 8.

Knowledge about current affairs is an important contributing factor for understanding and making sense of the world around us. Knowing what is going on in the world is the first step towards taking action – we need to be aware before we can act. Debate provides an excellent trigger for interest in current affairs through various mechanisms – **the competitive element involved in the way debate communities at the global level organize their activities (debate tournaments); the nature of *pro et contra* opinion confrontation where you want to show that you are more knowledgeable than the other team/person; and motivation through belonging to a community that cherishes information as the main foundation of its activities.**

	Group	Slovenia
Interest in the World		
Do you regularly inform yourself about political events (through media, e.g. internet, newspaper, documentaries)?	Y	Y
Do you believe you are informed enough about the political life of your community?	Y	O

Analysis showed that debaters in Slovenia seek information on current events on a more frequent basis than the group of non-debater respondents, yet they still believe they are not informed enough about political life in their communities. In the latter regard, the Slovene debate population stands out in comparison to other countries. In the other three countries, debaters on average believed that they are informed enough. The cause of this problem might lie in the historically low level of trust in democratic institutions since the question could also be understood in terms of 'do you believe that the government is hiding something from you'. What this answer also indicates, however, is that they would like to know more but for one reason or another are unable to do so. The quest for knowledge and being aware that you do not have it easily available at your disposal indicates a firm position on the issue at hand.

The fact that debate increases the need for more information and increases students' knowledge was also confirmed by the teacher/professor interviewees when asked about what kinds of effects they observe on the debaters and how we might understand debate as contributing to the skills and values of democratic citizenship and education for human rights:

- **P1**: students are more knowledgeable, informed, understand contentious socio-political issues;
- **P2**: they have more information;
- **P3**: they take on a broader perspective, their interest in current affairs increases, they gain information about the civic and political problems;
- **P4**: students learn about topics they wouldn't in class; they gain understanding of political issues through the preparation process on a topic; I teach them about human rights since it helps them explain different topics (e.g. rights v. responsibilities);
- **P5**: higher awareness and interest in issues (issues usually not thought in the classroom); awareness and understanding of civic and political issues (many issues are never tackled by the curriculum).

Interest in diverse topics and knowledge about current affairs undoubtedly increases significantly with involvement in debate. There is a significant difference visible with all four national samples and is also confirmed through mentors' evaluation of the methodology. Broadening the horizons of students and increasing their interest in global issues therefore stands out as an important aspect that could enrich the methodology of education for democratic citizenship and human rights education.

CIVIC AND SOCIAL SKILLS

The global debate community shares a commitment to promote active citizenship at all levels – from the way organizations function in their local environments, to the topics they address, and the values they promote. This part of the questionnaire revealed that debaters in Slovenia as well as in all four partner countries consider themselves as having a significantly higher level of social and civic skills. While the measurement was based on self-assessment (from *not true at all* to *I completely agree*), we believe it indicates an important understanding of the ways in which the organizations structure their missions and what its members believe they gain.

	Group	Slovenia
Civic and Social Skills		
Do you consider yourself to be a representative of active youth?	Y	O
Active youth statements	Y	Y
I'm up-to-date with current events.		
I actively participate in public discussions about current socio-political events.		
I'm confident in presenting my personal beliefs and opinions.		
I understand political concepts.		
I engage in constructive criticism about the work of the state.		
I understand the viewpoints of others.		
I actively participate in public life.		

Active citizenship skills are cultivated in numerous national and international projects and embedded in the organizational culture of the organization:

- debaters are encouraged to take on responsibilities in the work of the organization (lecturers, roundtable discussion moderators, public debate speakers, etc.);
- through project activities, they familiarize themselves with the work of different organizations;
- at different events, they are engaged as active co-creators of the topics they discuss with their peers, mentors, and guests (debates, roundtable discussions, simulation, interactive lectures).

Debate mentors also recognize debate as a tool that enhances the above listed social and civic skills:

- **R1**: debaters are good public speakers, they learn how to support an opinion;
- **R2**: debaters are '*a bit more skeptical and a bit less naïve*';
- **R3**: debate increases individuals' self-confidence; it helps them to become more social; they are more motivated to think about the problems and their causes as well as solutions with a range of diverse topics; they become more active in other activities;

- **R4:** debaters gain more self-confidence; they are better speakers; they cherish themselves more, they lose fear;
- **R5:** debate increases eloquence and confidence in public speaking.

As a general rule debaters stand out in terms of civic and social skills young individuals need in order to assume an active role in society. Three traits stand out in particular: **confidence, public speaking skills, and knowledge**.

FROM SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE TO ACTION – AN UNEASY TRANSITION

Active participation in public life is the desired outcome of all educational strategies in the democratic citizenship education paradigms. According to the questionnaire, this goal has been achieved in the debate community in Slovenia as well as in the project partner debate communities. In all categories that we measured, debaters as a group stand out when asked about their engagement at different levels (online, local, classical).

With the Slovene population there are two notable exceptions – self-perception of being an active citizen and discussion about politics in local communities. While they tend to be more active online and through classical political participation, they do not consider themselves to be representatives of active youth and they do not discuss politics in their local communities.

	Group	Slovenia
From Skills and Knowledge to Action		
Do you consider yourself to be a representative of active youth?	Y	O
How often do you participate in the following activities?		
Demonstrations	Y	Y
Petition signing	Y	Y
Online campaigning	Y	Y
Membership in a FB group with political motivation	Y	Y
Organization of a discussion	Y	Y
Discussion about political events in your community	Y	O
Discussion about politics with family and friends	Y	O

While debaters believe they are more active, two debate mentors expressed second thoughts with regard to the transition from active participation in the safe environment of the debate community to the real life:

- **P3:** 'debate educates students so that they will be in their adult life more able to think with their own heads and thus contribute to a better society', **yet the respondent** 'cannot judge their actual activity, maybe it increases a little, but the present times do not really promote active participation so debaters have a negative attitude towards participation in political structures', **but** 'maybe someday they will be the group that will be able to step beyond the frameworks of the established society';
- **P4:** answered that 'students do not want to talk about (same sex couple adoptions) at home because their family does not agree'.

As the two debate mentors point out, the transition can be hard because of the generally negative attitude towards young people expressing their opinion in the public space and because of the generally low confidence in political structures in general. Another explanation for the relatively low engagement in discussions on politics with family and friends is the general lack of a political communication culture in Slovenia. A lack of trust in political structures conditions this, since a widely felt belief is held that 'we cannot change anything anyway'. It is therefore encouraging that members of the community we nurture assess themselves significantly higher with regard to the level of participation than their peers. It would be too simplistic to assume that debaters are automatically more active citizens. Nonetheless, the way debate organizations are structured, the skills they teach, and the way in which they increase interest in gaining more knowledge about the world we live in gives ground to confirm their self-assessment in terms of actual participation.

Understanding and Talking to the Other

While formal debate is regularly equated with competition (and to a certain extent rightfully so), we as a community also need to ask ourselves what values we promote when equipping debaters with the skills and motivation to participate in public life. The Slovene debate organization firmly believes that it

is not our place to take a public stand on current political dilemmas. This safeguard has been installed with the aim of keeping the community open to all viewpoints and positions. Rather than being an incubator of specific content, its mission is to remain an ecosystem for building communities that have the skills and the knowledge to engage in a meaningful and respectful dialogue.

Social Distance and Semantic Differential	Group	Slovenia
Opinion strength about a general (contentious) topic	Y	Y
Opinion elaborateness about a general (contentious) topic	Y	Y
Semantic differential	O	O
Social distance	Y	O
Opinion strength about a (hallmark) personal trait	Y	Y
Opinion elaborateness about a (hallmark) personal trait	Y	Y
Semantic differential	O	O
Social distance	O	O

Being aware of the power of the tool we are equipping the young people with, we also need to pay attention to telling them how to use it. As one of the respondents noted (**R1**): '*I do not think that debate in education is good as such. If not used properly, it can lead towards sophism. It can become boring. It can produce rhetorically skilful fanatics. We should use it and see it as a tool to understand and evaluate society around us and not only as a toy of some kind.*'

We believe that the emphasis on values that education for democratic citizenship and education for human rights promote is of high importance and needs to go hand in hand with skills and knowledge. Respecting the opinion of others and being able to relate to their perspective on the world is paramount to building more inclusive societies that respect human rights.

To identify the way in which debate influences young people's attitudes towards other people, we decided to measure the semantic differential and social distance at a personal and social level. The results we got were bitter sweet:

- we expected debaters to be more tolerant and this did not show in the results;
- we were relieved that the prophecy of giving tools in the wrong hands did not happen – while debaters do hold stronger opinions, they are not 'rhetorically skilful fanatics'.

The conclusion we can draw from this is that the debate community in Slovenia is not significantly different from the population of their peers in terms of higher levels of tolerance. The other – equally important – conclusion is that debaters have stronger and more elaborated opinions about themselves as well as about contentious socio-political issues.[19] Having strong opinions is also one of the prerequisites on acting upon them and in this regard it is good that the confidence in an opinion does not lead to the ignorance of the other.

Some of these issues were also addressed in the mentor interviews:

- **R2:** debate softens the most fundamental values; based on gaining new information 'even the biggest fans have to rethink their own data'; 'it makes you understand that your point of view is not absolute - less zealotism does mean a better world';
- **R3:** debate could increase tolerance because you have to think about the viewpoint of others and understand them; 'still, it depends from student to student if they do so just to win or if the topic touches them on a more personal level'; 'when students admit after a tournament that they are not 100% sure about the topics, I consider that to be a great achievement';
- **R4:** learning about both sides brings better understanding of each other; sometimes they change their minds, sometimes they do not;
- **R5:** debating does not necessarily and conclusively result in increased tolerance.

Combined with skills, knowledge, and a strong opinion, we can say that debate significantly contributes to the perspective of young people on the world.

---

[19] A further interesting step of the analysis would be to investigate which topics were chosen by the groups of respondents and which personal traits. It would be interesting to see if debaters and non-debaters value themselves differently and which topics are of importance to the two groups.

Discussing Debate in the National Curriculum – How Can the Method Contribute to Democratic Citizenship and a Culture of Human Rights?

So far we have told a story of success. Debate under the auspices of ZiP provides tangible results for students in terms of:

- increased knowledge and interest in current affairs;
- giving students communication confidence;
- enhancing their civic skills;
- encouraging them to form strong opinions on issues.

Debate as a method is also regularly mentioned in different strategies of human rights education, global citizenship education, democratic citizenship education, etc. It is widely recognized as a successful method, yet it remains largely absent from the school curricula in the form of a moderated *pro et contra* dialogue. We have already mentioned one of the reasons for its absence – in order to practice it successfully, one needs time and knowledge about the method (**R2** and **R3**).

ZiP has become widely recognized at the national and the international level as a debate community that performs above average given its relatively modest financial capabilities. While dependence on project funds enables the organization's independence from 'the market', it is sometimes hard to plan in advance for a long-term organizational strategy.

Here are some of the insights that debate mentors who are closest to the school curricula and practice debate in the classroom shared with regard to the obstacles they face in their work:

- **R1**: organizational problems (lack of after school hours with students);
- **R2**: time (lack of after school hours with students); money (prioritizing between different obligations); pedagogical ('/.../ danger that debate will become a world of its own – some kind of a game where you do something and then you win – instead of a tool for understanding and evaluating the world around you /.../');
- **R3**: organizational (young people with different interests, school work); motivation (lack of after school hours with students); higher expectations from other professors about the performance of debaters;

complaints about missing hours in class due to debate tournament preparations; negative pedagogic impacts (winning more important to students than the quality of arguments, which can lead to skewing of information, manipulation);

- **R4:** debating rules (sometimes the three-persons-per-team rule impacts the social network structure of debaters); motivation (students not motivated enough to prepare at home); money (not enough money to go to competitions – lunch money, transportation); not enough time to implement the methodology in class; negative pedagogic impacts (students argue too much and only see a black and white picture – *'even if they debate on both sides there is too much of "we're right, you're wrong" going on'*);
- **R5:** lack of appreciation of the success by other professors; financial issues for attending tournaments, which has led to parents involvement (good, because it creates ownership).

Despite the fact that debate as a methodology brings tangible results to students that are engaged in the activity, it is hard to pass a judgment on whether it should become a part of the school curriculum. Our interviewees have all mentioned great benefits for students that are involved in debate, yet they remain cautious about the possibility of implementing debate in the school curriculum. When asked how they felt about it, what their suggestions are, and how they believe ZiP can get actively involved in the process, this is how they responded:

- **R1:** it should become a part of the national curriculum;
- **R2:** it is necessary that debate gets support but not in the form of implementation in the national curriculum (because, if not used properly, it could lead to negative pedagogical impacts);
- **R3:** ZiP should be included in the process of implementing debate in the national curricula in cooperation with experts from the Ministry of Education; mentors could organize themselves better and start lobbying for the inclusion of debate in the school curriculum ('/.../ this process should start today if we want to have it done in 5 years. /.../');
- **R4:** debate has advantages and this should be recognized; debate should be obligatory for at least a year because it significantly contributes to skills of public speaking, building arguments and

answering questions; ZiP should be included in the process of the implementing debate in the national curriculum because of the network and its experience; debate clubs should report on improvements, examples of best practices, preparation of the marking criteria;

- **R5:** '/p/lacing debate in the national curriculum has positive and negative aspects, in my opinion. On the plus side, more students would benefit from debate. The negative aspect is that, as soon as an activity becomes obligatory, it loses genuine motivation and inspiration.'

Concluding Thoughts

The road to implementing debate methodology in the school curriculum would be a rocky one. It would demand a lot of energy, commitment, and time from the staff and from the professors and teachers. The underlying message of all the interviewees was that debate should definitely be promoted, but there is a lack of consensus on the ways in which this could be done.

The lowest common denominator seems to be that debate should be implemented as an elective subject that all students as well as teachers should get acquainted with it. Rhetoric, for example, already got its place at the primary school level as an elective and debate is already a recommended method of teaching history and geography at the secondary school level. Implementing debate in the classroom would also require familiarizing teachers and professors with the method. ZiP has the capacities to provide this, but it does not have the necessary means.

There is no single solution to how to improve the culture of dialogue and awareness about the topics and values of education for democratic citizenship and human rights. Debate is one avenue that provides tangible results. It is now up to the debate community to reach a consensus on how this should be done and what our goals are. Support from the relevant ministries (Ministry of Education and Sport, Ministry of Foreign Affairs) is of a crucial importance in this regard if we wish to increase the impact of debate without sacrificing the quality that comes with a team of dedicated individuals.

Citizenship Education in Macedonia and the Results of the Analysis

Atanas Dimitrov
Debate Lecturer and Project Coordinator, Youth Educational Forum

Introduction

The STRATEGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION represents a systematic overview of the strategic provisions that are intended to increase the effectiveness of the educational system over the course of 10 years. The strategy was adopted in 2006.

The Strategy defines the basic principles that should trace the development of secondary education, with civic responsibility being one of them. It states that 'accepting the basic political values, rule of law, human rights, but also the obligations that are determined by the relation citizen-citizen, citizen-local governance, citizen-state as elements of political culture is crucial for the cohesion and survival of the community. As a consequence, we need to integrate these principles in the curriculum, into the pedagogical approaches, also by implementing new forms of extracurricular activities that address these issues'.[20] The result of this approach will be the creation of citizens that will have the civic knowledge and skills, will be keen on cooperation, tolerance, and mutual communication. Guidelines for the practical implementation are the following: educating teachers to use contemporary forms and methods of work in teaching content related to citizenship education; revising the existing curriculum so that it can be amended according to the latest trends in society, human rights, rights and obligations, etc.; developing standards for civic education applicable in secondary education; introducing external evaluation for the monitoring of teachers. The Strategy goes further in addressing these challenges. It acknowledges that it would not be enough merely to teach these principles; schools need to enforce them, for example, by including parents and to some extent students in school management. Schools also need to be both sensitive and active in promoting different cultural identities. The principle of political socialization and prevention of exclusion is also reaffirmed.

---

[20] Strategy for development of education, adopted by the National Assembly (2006).

Knowing that the period for implementation of the Strategy is slowly coming to an end, we are able to make a brief assessment of what has been realized so far. The overview is applicable to the 'gimnazija' (grammar school) regime.

With regard to the curriculum, citizenship education has been partially included in the following subjects:

Mandatory courses:

These subjects are considered to be the core of secondary education. They are mandatory for all high school students. They tend to be the criteria for a general standard that enables vertical and horizontal transition of students. There are 10 (11) mandatory courses in the first year, and their number decreases down the line.[21]

- Elements of democratic citizenship education are integrated in the *Sociology* curriculum (mandatory in the second year, optional subject in the third and fourth year, depending on the focus area students choose). The goals of the course are the following: to be able to understand the community; to be able to identify and explain the causes and consequences of social change; to develop a sense of tolerance, mutual understanding and respect for the rest of society, regardless of cultural, religious, national and social differences; to be able to describe, explain, and respect the cultural and civilization values of the country.[22]

- Elements of democratic citizenship education are integrated in the *Philosophy* curriculum (mandatory in the fourth year). Some of the goals of the course are the following: to be able to answer questions with argumentation; to practice tolerance in discussion; to be able to speak in public; to develop a sense of responsibility and confidence; to develop open and democratic citizenship.[23]

---

[21] Bureau for development of education, Gymnasium education, http://bro.gov.mk/?q=gimnazisko-obrazovanie.

[22] *Course program, Sociology for 2nd year,(mandatory course),* Skopje, 2002 http://bro.gov.mk/docs/gimnazisko/zadolzitelnipredmeti/Sociologija.pdf.

[23] *Course program, Philosophy for 4th year,* Skopje, 2002 http://bro.gov.mk/docs/gimnazisko/zadolzitelnipredmeti/Filozofija%20-%20IV%20gimnazisko.pdf.

- Elements of democratic citizenship education are integrated in the *Life Skills* curriculum (mandatory in all four years, one hour per week). Some of the goals of the course are the following: to develop knowledge, skills and personal opinions in terms of active citizenship; to respect and protect human rights and responsibilities; to develop a sense of national and civic identity; to understand the importance of volunteering; to learn how to use the services of different state institutions, etc.[24]

Optional courses:

These courses are grouped in three focus areas: science/mathematics, languages/art, humanities. They have the purpose of deepening and widening students' knowledge. They are taught two or three hours per week, from the second to the fourth year.

- Elements of democratic citizenship education are partially integrated in the Introduction to law curriculum.
- Elements of democratic citizenship education are integrated in the *Speaking and Writing* curricula (optional in second year). Some of the goals of the course are the following: to be able to practice different types and forms of oral expression; to express own opinions contrary to the conventional interpretation of the topic; to be able to write a personal biography, to be able to fill out different types of official and unofficial forms.[25]

Project activities:

Their purpose is to address students' different interests in certain areas. Due to their nature, they follow a different regime than regular mandatory subjects (70 hours, from first to second year).

- Elements of democratic citizenship education are integrated in the *Culture for Protection, Peace and Tolerance* curricula.
- Elements of democratic citizenship education are integrated in the *Urban Culture* curricula.

---

[24]*Course program, Life skills*, Skopje 2011, www.app.bro.gov.mk/docs/np/ozv_ nastavnaprograma.pdf.
[25]*Course program, Speaking and writing,* www.scribd.com/doc/151429498.

- Elements of democratic citizenship education are integrated in the *Civic Culture* curricula.

Integrated education

Integrated education is a new model of education that encourages young people to accept the multiethnic and multicultural context in which they live. The STRATEGY FOR INTEGRATED EDUCATION has been adopted in 2010. 'The overarching aim of this policy is to bring about tangible and considerable change in the general approach within the education system in accordance with the multi-ethnic reality of the country, as it is reflected in the Constitution and relevant legislation deriving from the Ohrid Framework Agreement'.[26] The Strategy includes the promotion of integration through joint activities, language acquisition, changes in the school curricula and textbooks, improving teachers' qualifications, promotion of decentralization, and changes in school management.

The Macedonian Educational System in Perspective

While, in theory, the strategies that have been adopted should help bring about a higher level of civic awareness and activity, as well as tolerance among the students, recent research shows that their implementation has been insufficient. In 'Capitulation, Confusion or Resistance: Social Capital among Macedonian High School Students' (published by YEF),[27] the authors point out several issues and discuss how effective the implementation of the Strategy for development of education is: 'Despite the fact that it is precise and created after a comparative analysis of positive foreign experiences, the Strategy did not get the necessary attention from the state and the organization that was appointed to lead the process of its implementation, the Youth and Sports Agency'. They further state that there is a lack of political will to implement the strategy, supporting this claim by pointing out that while the Strategy has been in force

---

[26] *Strategy for integrated education*, adopted by the Government (2010).
[27] Available at *www.reactor.org.mk/CMS/Files/Publications/Documents/1.3.%20Konfuzija_eng.pdf*.

since 2005, the first action plan for implementing it was adopted in 2009, a full four years after the Strategy was adopted.

The authors additionally cite the country's National Development Plan 2007-2009, which they believe also points out certain weaknesses in implementation: '[e]ducational programs continue to be approved at the national level; they are incoherent and closed and focused on content instead of objectives or problems. With this, they do not adequately respond to the needs of the economic, social, and individual development (also from the aspect of culture, creativity, protection of the environment and health). There is much left to be done in this respect'.

The study also shows that education has a role that cannot be overstated in the building of social capital in the country, that the number of civic skills taught in schools is the greatest predictor of civic activism, and that the more students participated in the building of these skills, the more they contributed to their communities. Students that are more skilled in civic engagement are more likely to practice it.

The general findings of the study showed that 'overall, the students in Macedonia display a high level of exclusion from the daily political events, in that they are disinterested, distrusting, and cynical towards public institutions. The only institutions students have confidence in are the educational ones. It seems that students live under a bell jar, displaying little concern about and removed from the problems that surround them'.

The experiences of numerous YEF trainers also support these findings. Therefore, the question posed is the following: Knowing that the formal educational system is lagging behind in terms of issues related to civic education, and realizing that civic engagement is mostly triggered by the increased access to civic skills, how can these skills be taught outside of the framework of the existing system?

A Short Note on How Debate is Taught in YEF

The debate program of YEF (Youth Educational Forum) is one of the ways in which the organization is trying to instill high school and college students with skills they are less likely to learn in the framework of formal education. It is one of the cornerstones of the organization and has been a part of the organization since its inception. Debate is currently not a part of the national educational curriculum, though the introduction of debate in the classroom has been attempted through less formal means and in cooperation with individual high schools, with mixed results. The majority of lectures are held at debate clubs located in one of the 12 cities around the country where YEF has local centers. The lectures are commonly held by volunteer lecturers. The latter are picked from the ranks of former high-school debaters and come from all walks of life. The current curriculum is composed of two years of lectures (though the possibility of expanding it is being discussed in the organization) – students spend one year listening to lectures in the beginners group and one year in the advanced group. The recruitment process usually consists of public debates, demonstration debates in individual classrooms, and of the distribution of leaflets and posters. Students from all years of high school are accepted, though fourth year students are usually not targeted during the recruitment process as it is believed that one year is too short of a period for these students (who are also preoccupied with final exams held at the end of the year) to learn how to debate properly.

Results of the Survey

The research we undertook can be separated in two distinct but interconnected parts – the questionnaire-based survey carried out in May and June 2013 and the interviews with debate lecturers carried out in May 2013.

While the same questionnaire was used during the survey in Macedonia as the other three partner countries, there were differences in the methodology. There was no time limit on the critical thinking part of the questionnaire, since YEF did not always supervise the filling out of the survey. We believe it was fairer to all respondents to fill out the questionnaire without a time limit than to enforce

one for a part of them, without being able to control the others. When analyzing the data received through the questionnaire, high school students with less than a year of debating experience were also included in the 'debater' category, which was not the case with the categorization in other partner countries. There is a very small number of high school debaters with more than two years of experience in debating – this group includes the advanced group of debaters and some assistant lecturers – and we believed that if we only counted those respondents as actual debaters, we would end up with a sample too small to be used in the research. We did, however, collect data on different experience levels of debaters, which would lend itself to a deeper analysis of how experience levels impact debaters' capacity for critical thinking, how informed and active they believe themselves to be, and how tolerant they were.

The survey was carried out during the national tournament as well as before and after debate lectures in clubs in YEF's 12 centers in Macedonia. High school students surveyed were either high school class presidents that attended trainings organized by YEF or students in grammar schools in Skopje – the surveys were carried out in classrooms, by professors and pedagogues.

Students and debaters were informed that the survey would be used to research their participation in extracurricular activities, but some debaters figured out the real purpose of the research. We do not believe their knowledge of the true purpose of the research significantly impacted the results. That being said, one should keep in mind the differences in methodology when cross-referencing the results of the countries that participated in the research.

The structure of the sample was as follows:

- a total 267 of respondents, of which 132 debaters and 135 non-debaters;
- 101 male respondents, 167 female respondents, 0 other respondents;
- age structure: 14-16 = 81 respondents, 17-18 = 186 respondents.

All interviews with lecturers were carried out in a non-formal setting, face to face, and were recorded. Questions agreed on by all the countries were posed and the interviewees were asked for clarifications of their opinions wherever needed. The interviews were carried out by a member of YEF who has media experience and is familiar with interviewing as a research technique. The interviewees were acquainted with the research and enthusiastic in their answers. One caveat which has to be noted here is that in a tight-knit

organization such as YEF, where it is not uncommon for members to be friends and know each other for more than 5 years, there is no way that the interviewer can totally abstract himself/herself from the process of interviewing. Hence, the personal relationship with the interviewees might have influenced the answers they provided. The interviewer was aware of this influence and tried to limit the inclusion of personal comments before and during the interview. While we do not believe this affected the interviewing process or the answers in a significant way, we feel that it is fair to point it out to the reader.

The interviewees were picked on the basis of their experience as debaters and debate lecturers. The structure of interviewees was as follows:

- one interviewee with more than 12 years of involvement in debate, 8 years as a coach;
- one interviewee with 10 years of involvement in debate, 6 years as a coach and tabulation officer;
- two interviewees with 6 years of involvement in debate, 3 years as coaches;
- one interviewee with 4 years of involvement in debate, 1 year as a coach.

The reason behind choosing this structure was to maximize the amount of useful information from the lecturers with different levels of experience, as well as to try to discover any possible differences of opinion and perception between the different experience levels. While the interviews themselves are worthy of a deeper analysis and interpretation, the limited space in this publication meant that we would focus more on the results of the questionnaire-based survey. This does not mean that we ignore the valuable insights gained through the interview. On the contrary, where possible and preferable, we use the statements of the lectures as aids in the interpretation of the results that we have obtained through the survey. The general conclusions from the interviews are as follows:

- All lecturers strive to make their lectures interactive, though there are differences in the way they try to do it.
- All lecturers believe that debate positively impacts the development of critical thinking, civic activism, knowledge of human rights, and tolerance.

- All lecturers believe debate motivates students to become better informed about the world around them.
- Lecturers find it difficult to generalize about the type of students who come to debate lectures and believe that debate as a discipline is inclusive.
- All lecturers agree that debate should be included in the curriculum of formal education in Macedonia, but believe this should only be done under certain conditions and only if it can be implemented correctly.

The analysis of the survey has brought some interesting results. Before we begin with the analysis, we would like to point out that the goal of the survey was to gain insights into what the situation on the ground was and how debaters fared in comparison with non-debaters on the measured variables. The scope of this survey, the sample, and methodology used do not allow us to generalize for the whole population of debaters. We can, however, discuss the possible reasons and factors that influenced the variables and try to draw conclusions from the qualitative evidence gathered through the interviews with the lecturers.

Let us first discuss the instances where the Macedonian results differ from the results of the international group. The only variables that show a difference between Macedonian results and group results are the second, third, and fourth critical thinking test variables. Unlike the results from other countries, in Macedonia there is no significant difference between the results of debaters and non-debaters. This means that both debaters and non-debaters performed equally well or equally badly on these three questions. The question we now need to discuss is why Macedonian results contradict those of the group, which show that in the case of these three questions debaters have significantly more correct answers than non-debaters?

Watson – Glaser Categories	Group	Macedonia
Drawing inference	O	O
Recognizing assumptions	Y	O
Deductive reasoning	Y	O
Logical interpretation	Y	O
Argument evaluation	O	O

Interest in the World		
Do you regularly inform yourself about political events (through media, e.g. internet, newspaper, documentaries)?	Y	Y
Do you believe you are informed enough about the political life of your community?	Y	Y
Civic and Social Skills		
Do you consider yourself to be a representative of active youth?	Y	Y
Active youth statements	Y	Y
I'm up-to-date with current events.		
I actively participate in public discussions about current socio-political events.		
I'm confident in presenting my personal beliefs and opinions.		
I understand political concepts.		
I engage in constructive criticism about the work of the state.		
I understand the viewpoints of others.		
I actively participate in public life.		
From Skills and Knowledge to Action		
Do you consider yourself to be a representative of active youth?	Y	Y
How often do you participate in the following activities?		
Demonstrations	Y	Y
Petition signing	Y	Y
Online campaigning	Y	Y
Membership in a FB group with political motivation	Y	Y
Organization of a discussion	Y	Y
Discussion about political events in your community	Y	Y
Discussion about politics with family and friends	Y	Y
Social Distance and Semantic Differential		
Opinion strength about a general (contentious) topic	Y	Y
Opinion elaborateness about a general (contentious) topic	Y	Y
Semantic differential	O	O
Social distance	Y	Y

Opinion strength about a (hallmark) personal trait	Y	Y
Opinion elaborateness about a (hallmark) personal trait	Y	Y
Semantic differential	O	O
Social distance	O	O

Y = Debaters are better than non-debaters
O = No difference between debaters and non-debaters
X = Non-debaters are better than debaters

We have three hypotheses as to why there is a difference in the results. The first and most obvious one is that the difference in the sample is causing the discrepancy – the Macedonian survey is the only one that counted students with less than a year of debating experience as debaters. There is a possibility that this group of respondents is the one that is causing the discrepancy in the results, since it is possible that answers of students with less than a year of debating experience would not be much different than those of students who have never debated at all.

A second possibility is that the lack of a time limit affected the results, giving both 'regular' students and debaters more time to think their answers through before writing them down. This can be checked by comparing the scores of Macedonian respondents with those of non-Macedonian ones and seeing whether Macedonian scores are significantly higher. This would lead us to believe that the extra time may have caused the generally higher results, though there would of course also be other factors to be taken into account.

The third and most problematic hypothesis is that the way debate is taught in Macedonia is flawed and does not transfer the knowledge of critical thinking as well as it should. This would mean that YEF has to seriously rethink the methodology, the curriculum, the content, and all other elements that comprise debate lectures in the country and see if there is a way to properly include critical thinking in the set of skills that are being transferred to the debaters. Out of the three, this is the most troublesome hypothesis. If proved true, it would require a total dismantling and rebuilding process of the debate program in YEF. It can also serve to explain the results of the first and fifth critical thinking test, where debaters and non-debaters alike have the same results. This is a

question that all participating organizations might need to ask themselves: How do we teach critical thinking through debate? Does debate teach critical thinking? What is our definition of the term 'critical thinking'?

On the other hand, group results for the first and fifth critical thinking variables show that, across the board, debaters and non-debaters scored the same results. While it is plausible, we believe that it is highly unlikely that four debate organizations with years of experience lack the know-how to transfer critical thinking to students that attend debate lectures. The statements from our interviewees corroborate this assertion – when asked about the influence of debate on everyday life, one interviewee answered: *'Just by teaching what an argument is, you immediately know that for everything you say you need to have a specific statement that is clear to everyone and that proposes something to be done. This is something that can easily be implemented in day-to-day life without even noticing it. It teaches you that you need evidence for everything you say, it teaches you how to evaluate that evidence'.*

When asked if debate is a good instrument for teaching critical thinking, a different interviewee had this to say: *'I believe it is one of the best instruments for teaching critical thinking. Other instruments, such as critical reading and writing, are not as good because they do not have the competitive aspect and because they do not improve one's rhetorical skills. I believe that debate is the best argumentation training one can get because it offers you another person that directly confronts you and your position. This does not happen with other methods where you only individually state your opinion or present your critical analysis'.*

As far as the second, third, and fourth critical thinking tests are concerned, we find the first hypothesis to be the most plausible one. It is easy to see the possibility of the discrepancy in results to be connected to a difference in the methodology. In the case of the first and fifth critical tests, we believe that there is room for improvement, but also invite the reader to read the Croatian team's proposed explanation of the results, which also raises a valid point.

The second part of the questionnaire is focused on how well informed debaters and non-debaters are on topics of public interest, as well as how actively they participate in civic and political activities. In all self-assessment questions, the debaters described themselves as better informed and more active than the non-debaters. This was a result that the group expected – debaters tend to be

more interested about information of public interest as well as trending topics and motions. Most debaters have spent a significant amount of time researching motions when preparing for tournaments and debates. It should thus come as no surprise that debaters generally consider themselves well informed, as opposed to non-debaters, who have not been extensively exposed to such information. We believe this indicates that debaters are more likely to be informed about important events and fields such as human rights and more likely to be active citizens. Our findings from the interviews support this claim to a certain degree. One interviewee characterized debate as a tool for activism:

 "The main reason for this is that you give students a tool – if they were helpless at one point of their life or they did not know what to do in order to express their views, they now have a tool enables them to go out and say what they need and want in public. You can do that either by having a public debate, making a campaign, or making a blog. Whichever way they prefer, they can influence the civil society'.

When asked whether debate makes students more likely to be active and politically involved, another interviewee was a bit more skeptical, though still supportive: *'I think it does. I do not know if it influences their activity as much as it affects their thinking and paying attention to politics in general, but it raises their awareness for sure. It is difficult to go directly from debate to activism. It does not mean that if you were a debater, you will become an activist'.*

Our interviewees also agree that debate positively influences students' knowledge of human rights. We asked our youngest interviewee whether debate significantly contributes to knowledge: *'Yes, since many of the motions concern human rights issues and policies, values, or phenomena that are intimately related to human rights. I believe students get to know what human rights are, maybe even get to know the importance of having and protecting human rights. So yes, judging from the contents of their debates, it would be natural to expect that they know more about human right'.*

The final part of the questionnaire explored the strength of opinion of debaters and non-debaters, as well as their tolerance toward different opinions. Firstly, we asked respondents to pick a topic from a list given in the questionnaire and write down how strong and elaborated their opinion on the topic was. We measured both tolerance toward policy related opinions (stances on the

environment, abortion, animal rights, etc.) and tolerance towards personal opinions (opinions on one's own appearance, intellect, sense of humor, etc.). We tried to gauge how debaters and non-debaters will respond to someone having an opinion that is opposite to their own opinions, and how tolerant they would be towards that person. The results show that debaters have stronger and more elaborated opinions. With questions on general (policy-related) opinions, debaters are more tolerant towards people with different opinions than non-debaters. However, debaters are equally tolerant of personal (self-image) opinions as non-debaters and when asked to describe someone who has an opinion that is opposite to theirs, there is no significant difference between debaters and non-debaters. Why are debaters equally tolerant as non-debaters on the issue of personal opinions? It might be that self-image is an equally important and touchy subject for both debater and non-debater high school students. On the other hand, even though they have developed stronger and more elaborated opinions, debaters are no less tolerant than non-debaters, whose opinions are neither as strong nor as developed. This indicates that debaters have a higher threshold of tolerance. On the semantic differential questions, the Macedonian team noticed a number of questionnaires, which seemed to have those fields filled out randomly or carelessly. A significant number of such answers might have affected the results. Of course, it is also possible that debaters reserve the right to dislike a person while tolerating it. Our interviewees also believe that students that debate are generally more tolerant:

"I think students are a lot more informed about everyday life, about concepts, and about ideas. Also, I think that we teach students how to do targeted research, how to form opinions, how to create arguments, how to defend their points of view. Most importantly, we also teach them how to understand that there are people out there who can disagree with them and that they are not necessarily their enemies or their polar opposite but should actually be listened to. Debaters try to understand them, debate with them; not necessarily to reach a common conclusion or a common opinion but just to have a fairly organized discussion with them'.

Looking Ahead

When we began this research, we realized that it might end up with more questions than answers. We accepted this fact because we are all moved by debate in one way or another. We also know that striving to answer these questions will help us improve the way we debate and the way we teach it. This research also displays some of the qualities that debaters hold in high regard – critical thinking, reason, informed decisions, active participation in our civil society, tolerance. By studying them, we have come one step closer to integrating them into our vision of debate in the future.

As far as YEF is concerned, the opportunity to debate should be accessible to everyone. It is a unique tool that we hope will one day be part not only of non-formal education in Macedonia but also the formal high schools and universities curricula.

Debate in Croatia and the Results of the Survey

Dino Parađina
Project Manager and Trainer at the Croatian Debating Society

Introduction

To examine and understand the findings of our survey (both the findings in Croatia and their similarities with those of the whole international group), we will explore how the debate program in Croatia functions and how educators utilize various possibilities that the program offers.

When it comes to the debate program, we will explain:

- the different relationships the debate program has with the Croatian education system,
- the educational background of instructors, what our program offers for their professional development, and the different types of instructors our program encompasses,
- the process of recruiting debaters to participate in the debate program,
- ideas, goals and methods we use in various parts of our debate program,
- an overview of our goals for further expansion of the debate program.

To offer a first-hand insight into the Croatian debate program, we interviewed four educators/instructors participating in it. Two of our interviewed educators are primary school instructors and two are students coaching debate clubs in high schools. This also reflects the first difference between primary school and high school debate programs: the majority of debate instructors in primary schools are teachers and/or other school staff, and most of the instructors in the high school part of the debate program are students who were debaters in high school before they became educators. One of our interviewed primary school educators is the school's librarian. She has been coaching the debate club in her school for six years. She has attended numerous seminars and trainings organized by the Croatian Debate Society (CDS) regarding debate and other non-formal education methods. She has attended many tournaments with her debaters, winning some of them. The other interviewee was a teacher before she

became the school counselor. She has been coaching a debate club for eight years now, winning national tournaments and also implementing debate methodology in her classes. One of our student educators studies pedagogy and has worked as a debate educator for two years now. The second one studies psychology and has been involved in the debate program in various ways for eleven years. Both of the interviewed students coach debate clubs that often achieve good results at debate tournaments.

From this we can also observe that the Croatian debate program is closely connected to the formal education program in Croatia. The Croatian Education and Teacher Training Agency – the official agency of the Ministry of Education – recognized CDS as an important partner in offering professional development to school staff and also recognized the debate program in primary and high schools as a valuable educational program. The Agency thus officially acknowledges competitions organized in cooperation with CDS and includes debate in students' academic transcripts. This status allows debate in Croatia direct access to schools, enabling CDS to form debate clubs with a high number of interested students. This is the first part of the relationship that the debate program has with the education system in Croatia: forming debate clubs which are closely connected to the school, gathering the students from the school, and providing additional educational content to the students. The other part of the relationship is represented by training courses for teachers on debate methodology and the use of debate in the classroom with various subjects. This is reserved for educators employed with the schools and it enables even more students to get the benefits of debate and debate methodology.

This also presents a picture of the two types of educators in our debate program: students who volunteer to coach debate clubs, and school employees who either start debate clubs in the schools they work at or use debate as a teaching method. We must also emphasize that school employees do a lot of volunteer work since their debate coaching activities often take up more time than the schools are willing to pay for. This demonstrates that the debate program in Croatia is highly appreciated even amongst educators working in the formal schooling system. Referring back to our interviewees, an explanation of how we recruit educators is in order. Both interviewed students said that them becoming debate instructors was a very 'natural process'. They were both debaters at first and felt the need to continue their debate work to improve their

own skills and to help others develop theirs. After starting university, they also began running debate clubs, judging debate tournaments and volunteering at CDS. The two interviewed school employees also had similar initial involvement in debate. They heard about the debate program from their colleagues, signed up for a beginners' debate seminar and started doing debate in their own schools. All four of them stated that the most appealing thing to them was the different approach to education that is different from the conventional teaching yet at the same time highly compatible with the school system. Most schoolteachers keep having problems with the majority of their students merely trying to memorize information and having a hard time expressing their ideas, thoughts and knowledge, along with having poor argumentation skills. The interviewees also opined that being oriented on delivering information rather than teaching how to use it was also the key problem with the contemporary formal system of education. Debate taught students how to analyze information, summarize and it, and express it in a form of a valid argument. Moreover, it taught students how to communicate (listen and speak) in a better way. Being able to learn that themselves and to teach it to others was the basis of the interviewees' motivation.

Results of the Survey

The questionnaire in Croatia was the same as in all four partner countries. We translated the questionnaire into Croatian using two different translators to ensure a high level of authenticity. Because the critical thinking part of our questionnaire suggested a five-minute time limit, volunteers working in pairs distributed questionnaires in written form. We pretested the questionnaire in order to measure the average amount of time required to solve it and realized that the five-minute time limit was a bit low, even for university students, and thus decided to extend it to six minutes for high school students. Because we extended time for both debaters and non-debaters, this did not impact the differences between the two groups.

The results were gathered from a sample of 258 high school students. Out of 258, 124 were debaters and 134 were non-debaters. As debaters, we only classified students who participated in the debate program for at least one school year. The survey was carried out at debate clubs' meetings where debaters were asked

to fill out the questionnaire. All students were informed about CDS' participation in the study exploring different extracurricular activities of high school students. However, we did not want to give away that the only important fact was whether they were debaters or non-debaters. Debaters attending debate club meetings for less than a year were placed in the non-debaters group. To construct the non-debaters sample we went to classes in two Croatian high schools chosen on the basis of having a reputation for being among the best high schools in Croatia. The reason for this was to gather data from a population of high school students that perform best in the formal system of education.

The table below presents the variables that were tested to see if there are statistically significant differences between debaters and non-debaters in Croatia and in the international group as a whole:

Watson – Glaser Categories	Group	Croatia
Drawing inference	O	O
Recognizing assumptions	Y	Y
Deductive reasoning	Y	Y
Logical interpretation	Y	Y
Argument evaluation	O	O
Interest in the World		
Do you regularly inform yourself about political events (through media, e.g. internet, newspaper, documentaries)?	Y	Y
Do you believe you are informed enough about the political life of your community?	Y	Y
Civic and Social Skills		
Do you consider yourself to be a representative of active youth?	Y	O
Active youth statements	Y	Y
I'm up-to-date with current events.		
I actively participate in public discussions about current socio-political events.		
I'm confident in presenting my personal beliefs and opinions.		
I understand political concepts.		

I engage in constructive criticism about the work of the state.		
I understand the viewpoints of others.		
I actively participate in public life.		
From Skills and Knowledge to Action		
Do you consider yourself to be a representative of active youth?	Y	O
How often do you participate in the following activities?		
Demonstrations	Y	Y
Petition signing	Y	Y
Online campaigning	Y	Y
Membership in a FB group with political motivation	Y	Y
Organization of a discussion	Y	Y
Discussion about political events in your community	Y	Y
Discussion about politics with family and friends	Y	Y
Social Distance and Semantic Differential		
Opinion strength about a general (contentious) topic	Y	Y
Opinion elaborateness about a general (contentious) topic	Y	Y
Semantic differential	O	O
Social distance	Y	O
Opinion strength about a (hallmark) personal trait	Y	Y
Opinion elaborateness about a (hallmark) personal trait	Y	Y
Semantic differential	O	O
Social distance	O	O

Y = Debaters are better than non-debaters

O = No difference between debaters and non-debaters

X = Non-debaters are better than debaters

Analysis of the Results

We first have to explain the differences between the Croatian results are the results of the rest of the international group. These differences only occurred with two variables. One variable asked students whether they consider themselves active youth. The other variable was the social distance scale regarding general topics. In both cases there were no differences found in Croatia, but there were some in respect of the rest of the international group. For the active youth membership variable, we believe this happened due to the wording of the variable. The term 'active youth' refers to political/social activism. If translated directly into Croatian, the term would be 'aktivna mladež' which is a term in Croatia referring to all sorts of activities such as sports, going out, etc. The term active youth is not a generally known term in Croatia, except among NGOs. We should have translated the term into 'politički aktivna mladež' (politically active youth), which would have been a more correct term in Croatian. We believe this terminological issue led to the difference in the results. With the social distance scale, we believe that the group result is artificial, not representing the true case. Since both semantic differential scales and the personal social distance scale show no difference both in the case of Croatia and the group, there is no reason for this social distance scale in case of the group to show the existence of the difference.

WHO IS A DEBATER?

Before explaining the results, a preliminary emphasis is necessary. This questionnaire provides insight into the existence of differences but not into what caused the differences in the first place. Two explanations are possible. The first one is that debate develops the measured variables, and the other is that students who become debaters are in fact students who already have those variables developed to a higher level. Therefore, before demonstrating why we believe that it is debate which develops those variables, we will offer insight into how students are recruited into the debate program.

There are three main ways in which debaters are recruited: presentation debates, handpicking students, and recommendations. Presentation debates are the most commonly used method and the most inclusive one. Information

about presentation debates is spread around schools, along with information on debate clubs at particular schools, and everyone is encouraged to come and see the debate and/or join the club. Joining the club is unconditional and students can leave at any time, without consequences. This is also the method our interviewees reported using. Handpicking students occurs with a school employee picking out students to come and try becoming a debater. This usually occurs if a school employee thinks that a student will benefit from debate; for example, our school counselor reported handpicking students with ADHD or students who are not socially adapted and encouraging them to join the debate club and see the benefits for their development. The other reason for handpicking, as is the case with our librarian, is to let exceptional students develop further. The third way of recruiting is by recommendation, which happens when debaters bring along their friends. These methods are not mutually exclusive and we do manage to make debate clubs highly inclusive. Another interesting observation that our educators report is the liberal orientation of most debaters. Our pedagogy student coach says: *'As far as characteristics of debaters are concerned, most students consider themselves liberal. There are occasionally 1 or 2 students per group that are highly conservative, which sometimes causes some issues in the dynamic of the group, with the majority getting upset/teaming up against the conservative student in order to get him/her to see the light'.* We are not sure if this is a general picture of Coatian high school students or just of the debaters. Nonetheless, when this occurs, it is not an issue but rather a valuable lesson for the whole group.

CRITICAL THINKING AND DEBATERS – ARE THEY ANY DIFFERENT?

The critical thinking part of the questionnaire brought expected results. The first part of the test – *Drawing Inference - discriminating among degrees of truth or falsity of inferences drawn from given data* – had the correct answers following a different logic from the one we teach debaters. The question required students to draw cause and effect links. Wrong causal linking coupled with information that seems to be supporting a certain cause and effect hypothesis is the most commonly used logical fallacy made by teachers, students, and the media. From our point of view, there is not enough data to draw definite conclusions as the results only demonstrate that the two things might be somewhat related but not whether they are in a causal relationship or whether there is a third variable

that is the cause of both effects. Moreover, there might be another variable, which interacts with one of those causes. Nor do the results show which variable affects which. The way we teach debaters should almost necessarily lead to a 'not enough data' answer and not to an answer that could be labeled as 'correct' or 'false'. Furthermore, in this variable both debaters and non-debaters scored equally badly, not equally well.

The fifth variable – *Argument Evaluation* – has a similar problem. According to the way we teach debate, our debaters would never consider those arguments to be arguments as such but rather only statements that could potentially be built into a valid argument. After teaching them how to build a valid argument, we cannot expect them to consider this level of argumentation to be argumentation, but merely ideas for argumentation. We believe that is the reason why no difference was found.

The second, third and fourth critical thinking variable – *Recognizing Assumptions, Deductive Reasoning, and Logical Interpretation* – were the variables that we believe debate develops. All of them represent skills we develop when analyzing debate topics. Debaters need to have those skills highly developed in order do create good arguments and figure out flaws in the opponents' arguments. Our instructors also report using various methodological exercises to develop these skills. For example, our school counselor says that 'group brainstorming about the topic requires the whole group to actively participate and discuss ideas for arguments, as well as create arguments which are valid and understandable for the whole group'. Our librarian also uses brainstorming when working with primary school debaters. Our students, however, prefer using exercises such as giving topics to their debaters, asking them to create one or two good arguments, and then discussing each argument and its possible improvements. Our psychology student also emphasizes that he likes giving his debaters a lot of exercises without much introduction, and doing the feedback after, which in his experience facilitates a process of self-learning.

In the active youth part of the questionnaire, we also expected the results we received. When setting up motions for debate tournaments, we try to keep them in line with current social affairs. This requires debaters to do more research and to inform themselves well about current affairs. This empowers them and builds up self-confidence and sensibility that makes them more active. It is difficult to claim for certain that they would do the same if it were not required for them in order to be good debaters. However, it is certain that debate encourages them to do so. Our school counselor and librarian instruct their debaters to watch interesting political TV-shows and read newspapers. Debaters have to try to understand what the speaker is saying, what his/her position on the topic is, and how he/she makes his/her argument. At the start of every debate meeting they discuss what they have heard and read about. Our high school mentors do not report using this, but they nevertheless encourage discussions about current political events and use debate topics on such events as motions for exercise debates.

In the *tolerance towards people with opposite opinions* part of the questionnaire, we expected debaters to be significantly more tolerant than non-debaters. These results are not entirely in contradiction with our expectations. Debaters demonstrated stronger and more elaborate opinions, but there were no significant differences in the levels of tolerance in comparison with non-debaters. This shows that even though debaters have stronger opinions, this does not lead to less tolerance. The idea here is that if non-debaters had equally strong and elaborated opinions, they would be significantly less tolerant than debaters. This, of course, is only an idea that should be further researched. We believe this happens to debaters because they are required to argue in favour of both sides of the debate – the side they personally agree with and the side they disagree with. This gives them valuable insight into potential counter-arguments. The pedagogy student instructor said: *'The first thing that always happens with debaters is the shock of having to make arguments both affirming and negating the motion. This occasionally causes problems when they are only starting to learn how to debate. The wonderful thing happens afterwards – only a few weeks after new debaters start to understand that every argument has two sides and that both can be argued in favour of and explained, they also begin to*

share that with their friends and peers, sharing their new knowledge and ideas with them'. Our librarian emphasizes that her teaching approach entails a ' that she explains from the start that all opinions are equally welcome and valuable and that they should be respected. Our pedagogy student instructor likes to start with theatre exercises to build up good group dynamics for this.

Ideas for the Future

Besides the already discussed benefits of debate, all interviewed debate instructors notice a valuable socialization aspect of debate that transfers to other interpersonal relationships of debaters. However, this is also the source of certain problems. For example, our psychology student reports that sometimes it is hard for him to find a balance between encouraging socialization and getting debaters to work. The other problem occurs when debaters start questioning their parents' and teachers' authority too often. Thereto, some parents react in good way and others, mostly the stricter ones, find it annoying.

Most other obstacles that our educators encounter originate from unresolved problems with the school system. The first problem is the regulation of the student educators' status. We consider student educators an invaluable asset, especially when teaching debate. Although working voluntarily, their respect and status as educators varies significantly from school to school. Some schools treat them with gratitude and respect. Others, however, treat them as if the schools were doing a huge favor to the student for letting him/her coach the debate club in the first place. We are trying to solve this by signing volunteer contracts between students, schools, and CDS to be able to officially regulate their status. The other problem comes from debate not being officially regarded as a valuable subject such as, for example, mathematics or Croatian language. We are trying to solve this by implementing debate into the national curriculum.

A more precise regulation of the educators' and debaters' status is necessary if debate is to be better implemented in schools. We believe this would also enable/encourage more students to participate in debate. The major obstacle to this, however, is trying to effectively include students as educators in the program. Besides having the energy and will to do it, students bring in a form of peer education that the teachers cannot. With the institutional educational

system being as rigid as it is and having its objectively recognized flaws, there is an even greater need for non-institutionalized education. Our greatest challenge lies in finding the middle ground between these two options.

Exploring the Romanian Experience

David Moscovici
Vice President of ARGO Debate

The Status of Human Rights Education, Global Citizenship Education, and Democratic Education in Romania

Consistent with the case of all other post-communist countries in Eastern Europe, Romania is still in a transition period towards becoming a fully democratic state. Most of the remaining issues that separate Romania from Western Liberal Democracies such as Germany or France derive from the lack of knowledge and education about democracy and human rights that is still present with a considerable part of the population.

At the moment, there are substantially more programs in Romania that aim at solving this situation than in previous years, but the lack of coordination between them and the remaining low availability of sponsorship makes their success limited. The government's involvement in these efforts is still limited, as most resources available at the Ministry of Education are allocated towards building infrastructure (schools, training teachers, creating new curriculum, etc.). However, since 2005, the primary school and middle school curricula include a class on 'Civic Studies', where pupils are taught about the basic values and mechanisms lying at the foundation of democracy, about the rationale behind the most important human rights, etc. These classes provide a basic knowledge about these things and form a foundation upon which future education in the field might improve each student's understanding of these subjects. This change in the curricula has been part of the first phase of The Plan of Action of the World Program for Human Rights Education, a program Romania ascribed to in 2005.

The preoccupation with the teaching of human rights in pre-university educational units resulted in: training-for-trainers courses for the teaching staff in the pre-university educational system, organized in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports and the Teachers' Training Centers; a national contest on didactic creativeness in the field of auxiliary

materials devoted to education for human rights, democracy, and a culture of peace in the pre-university education system, which is at its sixth edition and, as a matter of fact, still under way; and other contests for students such as the 'Civic Education Olympics' and the contest on 'Democracy and Tolerance'. These contests, organized by the Romanian Institute for Human Rights in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports, known as the 'Olympics', meet the need for education in consonance with the role and the status of citizens of a democratic society. They are meant to shape and develop the competence to participate in public life, to have a critical social spirit, and to cultivate an attitude of tolerance.

Since 2009, Romania also started implementing the second phase of The Plan of Action that primarily aims at providing higher education on human rights, democracy, and European institutions to state officials, teachers and educators, civil servants, law enforcement officials, and military personnel at all levels. This second phase was implemented in partnership with the Romanian Institute for Human Rights (RIHR). At the same time, 'Human Rights' was introduced in higher education units as a discipline taught in the form of regular courses in humanities-oriented universities and pilot courses in various technical universities.

Additionally, The Ministry of Education and The Ministry of Foreign Affairs created partnerships with many NGOs that provide education regarding human rights and democracy. One of the most important NGOs in these fields is the 'Pro Democracy Association' that runs numerous programs such as 'Youth Parliament' (now at its fifth edition), different democracy clubs, the 'Why Democracy' film festival, 'Guide for Democracy', and many others. Youth Parliaments have been the most successful, gathering hundreds of teenagers and young adults at each edition and providing them with a first-hand experience of the inner-workings of a parliament and thus with a greater understanding of how democracy works.

Another NGO that started programs related to Human Rights Education is FOND, the Federation for Development NGOs in Romania, whose biggest program is 'Education for Development', a program that aims both at making the general population informed about human rights, children's rights, fair trade, gobalization and other similar topics, and also at researching the exact level of awareness regarding the above-mentioned topics. Such a purpose is

shared by another prolific NGO, the Institute for the Study of National Minorities Issues, which, alongside minor informational campaigns regarding minority rights abuse in Romania, is a research powerhouse in the field of minority rights and aims at providing to the world the most accurate picture of the situation of national minorities in Romania.

The Ministry of Education entered into international partnerships too, one of the most important ones being the 'Human Rights Education in Practice!' program (organized by SCI-RO, Service Civil International Romania), which in 2009 gathered young adults from Poland, Romania, Ukraine, Moldova, and the Russian Federation and offered trainings on human rights. At the same time, due to a similar partnership, British Council managed to craft the 'Rights in Deed', a Human Rights Education manual that represents essential materials for secondary school students.

At the moment, there is also a rise in the involvement of local authorities in promoting Human Rights Education. One such example would be the 2009 program organized by the Dambovita County, which provided direct education to more than 1.600 children from rural areas as well as trainings for more than 80 teachers.

Human Rights Education should be an integrated constitutive element of any educational undertaking. The more every person and institution engaged in its achievement fulfils this task with competence and responsibility, the bigger its effectiveness. Systematic encouragement of positive attitudes and behavioural patterns, respect for other human beings and their dignity, tolerance, and solidarity are not the 'prerogative' of a specialized institution but a constantly cultivated quality of the entire social environment, continuously optimized in terms of structures, institutions, social categories, and individuals. This educative mission should be undertaken by all societal institutions. There is a need for more partnerships, particularly with the schools, in order to implement proactive educational policies.

Debate: Doing a World of Good

INTERVIEW WITH SIMONA MAZILU, DEBATE COACH/TRAINER AND ARGO DEBATE ASSOCIATE

1. Debate Background

How long have you been involved in debate?
Since 1994.

In what way are you involved in debate?
As a debate coach, judge and teacher-trainer; as a classroom teacher using debate as a tool for teaching, as well as an associate or representative of NGOs ARDOR and ARGO.

Approximately how many tournaments have you participated in?
It would be impossible to give you an exact number. I have participated in several competitions, championships, and tournaments a year: locally, regionally, nationally, internationally, and even globally, starting 2004 (the World School Debating Championship). I think more than 100, given the fact that next year I will have been doing this for 20 years.

What age group of students do you teach and work with?
Mainly high school students – 14 to 18 year olds. Occasionally, adults too.

How were you introduced to debate as an educator?
I received a letter in my regular mailbox informing me about a contest initiated by the Soros Foundation for the three scholarships aimed at enabling the winners to participate in an international training session targeted at introducing attendees from various Eastern European countries (former communist states) to debate. This event was to take place in Budapest, in March 1994, and I was one of the three Romanian representatives.

Why have you decided to start teaching debate in the beginning?
At first, it was not my own decision. I was supposed to share what I had learned in Budapest with my students and peers back home. In other words, I had been assigned the task of piloting the debate program I had newly been acquainted with in my own country, starting with my school community, and continuing at the national level with teachers of different specializations, who were to become debate instructors for the students in their schools. Then, teaching debate to both students and teachers and training debate trainers was to

become an essential part of my life, adding new and challenging dimensions to my career as an educator.

2. Methodology

What methods do you use to teach debate?

Debating in or out of the classroom can take many forms. Though not an all-inclusive list, the following debate methods offer a range of opportunities to increase students' understanding and active involvement in the activity:

1. The four-corner debate
2. The role-play, the balloon debates, and variations of balloon debates;
3. The fishbowl;
4. The think-pair-share;
5. The meeting house.

The four corner debate starts with a question or statement, such as: "We should buy locally produced food." Students are then afforded time to personally consider the statement and their view based on the topic. The four corners of the classroom are labeled 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'disagree', and 'strongly disagree'. After personal consideration, the students move to the corner that most represents their position on the issue. The groups in each corner of the classroom then work together to come up with the best arguments for their position. After a specified time for group discussion, each group presents their strongest arguments to the other groups. This can be made in presentation form or through a more directed debate where the professor or assigned students can moderate and allocate time for each group to present and rebut. After the debate, students are permitted to switch sides if their personal views changed. This form of debate directly challenges the dualism of argument, showing there are more than two sides to an issue and, often, variations of the sides.

Role-play debates, balloon debates and variations of balloon debates also help to avoid dualistic debate models by assigning students to argue on behalf of different characters in a given situation. For instance, when discussing national health care, students could be assigned to various roles, such as doctor, patient, a wealthy person, a poor person, a lawyer, a judge, an insurance company, the president, and so on. By debating the issue from various points of view, students can broaden their understanding of the issue and its complexity.

Fish bowl debates can take several different forms, but usually involve grouping chairs in a circle pattern. Several chairs are then placed inside the circle for teams representing the different positions of the debate. Chairs can also be added for several students representing the audience. To bolster attention among those outside the fishbowl, an empty chair can be added, which is free game, allowing someone from the outside to enter the fishbowl to ask a question or make an argument.

Think-pair-share debates require students to think and make individual notes on the issue. After personal reflection is completed, pairs are formed. The pairs then work together, comparing their notes and creating lists to support both sides of the issue. Once complete, pairs of two are combined with another pair. The newly formed groups of four discuss the issue, choose a position, and edit their list down to their best arguments. Finally, the groups of four present their position and reasons to the class.

Meeting-house debates: in a meeting house debate, each team makes an opening argument. The class is then given the opportunity to question each side. The teacher/debate instructor serves as moderator, ensuring each side gets an equal amount of time to argue. In order to encourage more class participation and prevent certain students from dominating the questioning, the moderator assigns cards to each student. After each question, the questioner gives up one card. Once a student is out of cards, he or she cannot ask another question until all other students run out of cards. Alternatively, if three cards are assigned, a questioner that has two cards remaining may be prohibited from asking another question until everyone else in the class has only two cards.

In what sort of contexts do you teach debate?
- In the classroom, both in my specialized classes as an English teacher and in the so-called 'advisory classes' – which in Romania are a kind of educational classes held with the students a teacher is responsible for throughout a four-year interval of time (i.e. for the entire duration of high school);
- outside the regular classroom, in a debate club;
- on various training occasions – for other schools/institutions in my town and in the country; for the British Council in Bucharest; for the teaching staff and the Prahova County Board of Education in my home town, etc.;

- at various national and international events – as an English teacher and/or debate trainer: the RATE (Romanian English Teachers' Association) Conferences, the Macmillan Romania Conferences, the UNISCAN Conferences etc; the TESOL Macedonia-Thrace Conventions in Greece; the IDEA Youth Forums, the World Schools Debate Academy in Slovenia, etc.

What types of exercises do you use to teach debating?

Different types. Since the list of possibilities is endless, I would rather look at them from the perspective of their goals and objectives: speaking skills exercises; motion type exercises; argumentation exercises; proposition/opposition case-building exercises; points of information exercises; find-the-principle exercises; refutation and rebuttal exercises, etc.

What type of debate education do you think advances debate skills best? (*Debate camps, lectures, workshops, competitions, etc.*)

All of the above-mentioned types are valuable ways of advancing debate skills, in one way or another. Nevertheless, from the perspective of debaters themselves, the best way is the one that weds theory and practice, with an emphasis on the latter. In my view, learning by doing is the most powerful way of developing one's debating skills. Just like one learns to read by reading, to write by writing, to speak by speaking, one will learn to debate and improve their skills and abilities by debating. Therefore, debate camps and competitions should come first; workshops next, and lectures last – in terms of practicality and effectiveness or efficiency.

3. **Obstacles**

What organizational obstacles have you encountered in teaching debate?

Mainly pedagogical challenges, especially in large classes where there was a much greater variety of students in the course:
- The proportion of students who felt anonymous, invisible, and isolated was significantly higher, and thus engaging students with the material proved particularly difficult.
- There was much variation in students' ability, motivation, and learning style given the large variety of factors that influence how well a student performs in a class and we generally have little or no control

over most of them. Nonetheless, there are things we can always do to increase the likelihood that all our students, and not just those who are academically gifted, perform up to their potential as a result of their successful involvement in types of activities that facilitate learning complex ideas and intellectual skills.

What are the organizational problems of introducing debate techniques in educational process?
The same as above.

What are the institutional problems of introducing debate techniques in educational process?
None so far, in my case.

What are the difficulties in working with debaters?
Basically, there are two main types of difficulties:

- The motivation-based ones. In other words, students are generally full of enthusiasm when they are first introduced to debate, when things are easier and more relaxed and therefore less stressful and time-consuming. As debate trainings become more complex and challenging, requiring more effort, time, and dedication, some of them begin to feel overwhelmed by the double workload. All this makes their life hectic and complicated, causing them to lose their motivation for debating and eventually give up.
- The ego-based ones. These are the hardest to deal with, since they are permanent: more often than not, the more advanced and competent debaters are, the higher the likelihood of their egos becoming domineering and overbearing will be.

Are there any significant negative responses to debate activity (*teachers, teacher community, other NGOs, other national organizations*)*?*
None from NGOs or national organizations, quite the contrary. For example, our national organization, ARDOR/The Romanian Association for Debate, Oratory and Rhetoric has always been supportive and cooperative, while also creating or being engaged in projects, programs, events, etc. that involve a number of other Romanian NGOs as well.

The teacher community at large has generally been favorable to debate activity, being open to learning how to use debate in their own classes. There have been

only sporadic instances of teachers rejecting such activities on grounds that they are disruptive and time-consuming, or, in one word, counterproductive. Some of them also suspected debate of posing a serious threat to their authority in the classroom.

Does debate as such (as a technique) have any negative effects? Is there anything in the debate technique that prevents successful and efficient implementation?
Debate as a technique has no negative effects – on the contrary, it only brings benefits. I have not been confronted with anything of the kind. The debate technique as such cannot be blamed for the failure of its implementation, which is a complex process that needs to be carefully thought out and planned.

4. Students

What kind of students do you work with (is there any specific type or characteristic of these students)?
I work with high school students, aged 14-18, whose specific characteristic may be their ambition to excel in something that is less common among their peers, that makes them stand out from the crowd.

What is the general reaction of students when they are introduced to debate?
The ambitious high-flyers are more than positive about the opportunity, while the superficial and/or lazy ones are not at all enthusiastic about it and try to avoid it as much as they possibly can.

What type of students are involved in debating? (*In terms of values held, social background, political orientations or other relevant characteristics*).
Students from lower and middle classes, with different political orientations (social democratic, liberal, democratic-liberal), with parents belonging to all walks of life. In terms of values, here are some of the most representative: ambition, individuality, integrity, responsibility, respect, dedication, loyalty, justice, excellence, accountability, dignity, empathy, courage, independence, compassion, friendliness, persistence, perseverance, optimism, dependability, flexibility, etc.

Are students more motivated for critical analysis, research, learning when they do all that within competitive debate?
Hardly ever.

What are the biggest obstacles students face when they start debating?
Broadly speaking, peer pressure – because at this age (14-15) students tend to spend most of the time with their friends and colleagues – and parental resistance.

5. **Results**

What are the biggest changes that take place in debaters and in the student community as a result of their involvement in debating? Give us examples of such changes. What skills, abilities, or characteristics do debaters gain? Is there a change in how they interact socially? Why do you think using debate is good? Have you done any studies to see what results debate brings?

In the process of learning how to debate students become active listeners, engaged in and committed to a contest of ideas. They become accustomed to developing their argumentation on multiple levels; they acquire the skills of close textual reading and critical thinking, excelling in rigorous intellectual activities with positive effects on all aspects of their lives; they start thinking in terms of a goal that is distant, discussing controversial issues in a peaceful and rational manner; they become self-confident and able to express their views openly; they gradually develop a sense of excellence that, in turn, enhances their leadership skills and the need to constantly break their own limits. They become effective communicators, being more sensitive to the many problems confronting their community and society at large, which stimulates and improves their social interaction. For all these reasons, and many more, although I have not done any studies to concretely see what results debate brings, I am firmly convinced that using debate does a world of good.

6. **Human Rights Education and Active Citizenship**

How about civic awareness and understanding of civic and political issues? How informed, understanding, and tolerant are they of contentious socio-political issues? Do you think debate significantly contributes to Human Rights Education? In what way ? Illustrate.

Yes, definitely. Debate significantly contributes to Human Rights Education since it 'forces' students to become more and better informed about a multitude of issues so as to be able to debate them in various contexts; in and out of the

classroom, in their debate clubs, and, most importantly, at debate camps and tournaments – at national and international levels. In sharp contrast with non-debaters in the same class or school, students who have been actively engaged in debate for a year or two already manifest a higher degree of tolerance concerning contentious socio-political matters and a deeper understanding of the complexity of civic and political issues. In a nutshell, they demonstrate visibly increased civic awareness.

7. **Introducing Debate Through NGOs' Project Work and/or Through National Curricula**

What are the national systemic priorities in introducing the debate method? How to upgrade the existing models of debate – should debate be introduced only within the NGOs' project work or also within the national curricula? What do you think of different possibilities of introducing the debate in the national curricula (through Ministry of Education, with a special emphasis on NGOs and their role in the implementation of debate)? Should NGOs be included in the process of forming national curricula? How can debate clubs at the middle school level, high school, and university level be cooperative and productive partners in forming the national curricula?

In Romania, debate was introduced with ARDOR – our national NGO - a long time ago (around 1997) and has only recently (2011) been added as an elective to the school-decision curriculum, through the Ministry of Education and with the firm support of ARDOR, whose role in the introduction and implementation of debate has been decisive. Therefore, I am inclined to believe that NGOs should be included in forming the national curricula. Debate clubs at various educational levels – middle school, high school, and university – can be cooperative and productive partners in forming the national curricula by way of exchanging their philosophies and views on diverse issues in order to reach consensus for the common good of all actors involved.

Debate as a Performance Sport With a Multitude of Positive Effects

INTERVIEW WITH DAVID MOSCOVICI, VICE PRESIDENT OF ARGO DEBATE

1. Debate Background

I have been actively involved in debate for over ten years, representing Romania at the World Schools Debating Championship as a member of the Romanian national team and later twice as its coach. While at University, I have also been an English as a Foreign Language finalist at the Worlds Universities Debating Championship.

2. Methodology

I focus on teaching theory for segments of no more than an hour at a time and on surrounding those nuggets of theory with plentiful practice. The focus of my work is on teaching the skill to acquire, deduce, and produce information rather than on transmitting said information. I use competitive exercises so as to motivate the students, as well as exercises that take debaters out of their comfort zone so as to expand their intellectual range. The best way to keep students involved in debate is twofold. On the one hand, for those that have debate as a second or third priority, it is important to always prove to them that debate is a superior investment in self-education. For those that actually want to fully commit to debate as a performance sport, showing that there is a supportive community, in terms of training and socially, is paramount.

3. Obstacles

Institutionally, the mentality of schools tends to be not so much hostile as indifferent. With opponents of debate that find it not to be 'proper' education focused on accumulating knowledge outnumbered by proponents that believe it excels as a method in both accumulating knowledge as well as building other practical skills, most teachers are still either unaware or indifferent about what debate entails. Organizationally, since it is a voluntary activity with minimal-to-none funding, rallying trainers so as to engage with bigger projects and numbers of students is an ongoing challenge that we succeed in only thanks to the dedication of a few individuals in love with debating. Pedagogically, since debate revolves around competitions, it is a permanent challenge to focus on

shaping the students as thinkers and communicators rather than on what-wins-competitions, especially when others do so.

4. Students

Students initially approach debate for their resume building, for improving their English, or for impressing teachers. However, a significant segment of these become committed to the sport itself. Both extraverted student interested in self-expression as well as introverted thoughtful students are gathered and made friends through debating.

5. Results

The students are shaped to become autonomous thinkers and become able to learn without being directly taught. With ongoing guidance available from trainers for these advanced learners, debaters almost exclusively become high power educators, professionals, and active citizens.

6. Human Rights Education and Active Citizenship

Debaters are certainly more aware of political theory and events, and are more capable of making informed decisions. While awareness of the more superficial elements of politics often disappoints them and alienates them from direct involvement in political life in some ways, they are always the people to spread information and concepts to those around them that are ready to listen and to discuss rationally.

FOR A CULTURE OF DIALOGUE:
ESSAYS FROM THE FIELD

On the Meaning of Culture of Dialogue

Zdenka Čebašek-Travnik, Ph.D., M.D.
Former Human Rights Ombudsman of the Republic of Slovenia (2007-2013)

I was pleasantly surprised by the invitation to write the present contribution, given that I was asked to discuss an issue that I have indirectly been involved with my whole life, namely, the culture of dialogue as it relates to interpersonal relations and human rights. Interestingly, this is a connection that I have not thoroughly contemplated before.

I first encountered this perspective on the culture of dialogue during my Human Rights Ombudsman mandate. There, the culture of dialogue represented a distinct skill that was best displayed when I had to confront people whose opinions about a certain matter differed from mine. In other words, my job was to determine whether a certain act of an organ of the state or a local community was in conformity with existing rules. When a wrongdoing was established, criticism and recommendations followed. This process, however, was often turbulent and many of the words exchanged were not exemplary of a *culture* of dialogue. Nonetheless, this represented my sincere attempts to provide people with the necessary environment for a peaceful resolution of conflicts.

An interesting experience during my ombudsmanship was the meeting of various state representatives coming from countries with a poor human rights record. Whenever I received invitations to these kinds of meetings I had to determine what the purpose of me being there was. Some opined that I should decline the invitation and take a positive stand against human rights violations in that particular country. What would I have accomplished by doing so? In my opinion, nothing. My hosts would have resented such behavior and my well-meaning 'advisers' would soon have forgotten that anything happened. It was a much greater challenge to go there, present my views on the importance of human right protection, and listen to the views of the hosts. These visits always evolved into lively yet respectful discussions. As a guest, I was allowed to speak with a more critical voice than other human rights defenders from the host states. At the same time, however, the latter had the opportunity to hear how human rights violations also occur in Western countries with a functioning democracy, and how the struggle for human rights is necessary in Slovenia as

well. I was always sincerely interested in hearing about their ways of dealing with human rights challenges and how they handled politically and socially sensitive issues.

Looking at the place where I come from, a few examples of my work come to mind. As a scout, I conducted workshops for numerous fieldtrip participants. With them, I addressed certain questions regarding the Slovenian family code that was the subject of a heated public discussion back in 2012. It was interesting for me to see how their attitudes towards gay parents slowly shifted. A very negative initial stance gradually 'softened up' as they came to realize that their best friends might as well come from such a family background.

As a psychiatrist I am well aware of the relationship between stigmatization and discrimination of persons with mental disabilities. As the Human Rights Ombudsman I paid special attention to this particular issue, because a new Mental Health Act was under discussion during my mandate. I participated in educational programs for specialists working with patients with mental illnesses. My activities made me realize how difficult it is to change the attitudes towards such patients among professionals working in the field, let alone among people that only come into contact with them occasionally.

That a more inclusive culture of dialogue is of utmost importance for the improvement of living conditions of Roma communities has long been established and some significant positive steps in that direction have already been made. One such example that is especially dear to me comes from a small Slovenian village called Pušča. There, the culture of dialogue represents the functional foundation of the local kindergarten that welcomes, embraces, and hosts Roma as well as non-Roma children. This truly is a positive example that we should all be proud of and should promote it at the European level.

A more constructive culture of dialogue is also needed when addressing environmental problems, where the culture of power still dominates the discourse and the polluters still lead the game. Consequently, the criticisms and complaints of affected populations are still largely overheard. A similar situation occurred when a law selectively lowering the pensions of certain groups of retired persons was enacted. The excuse that 'there was not enough time' precluded the emergence of a public discussion on the potential human rights impacts of the legislation in question. However, the discriminatory nature of the

law was subsequently confirmed in a judgment of the Constitutional Court to which I had turned in my capacity as the Human Rights Ombudsman.

As a doctor, I wish to point out another important aspect of the culture of dialogue, namely, the one concerning the doctor-patient relationship. Although Slovenia adopted pertinent legislation in respect of this field, medical practitioners are nonetheless often confronted with a very specific topic – how the doctor-patient relationship should look like when patients decide to seek treatment with specialists using complementary or alternative medical methods. Can patients reveal to their doctors that they sought help with an alternative healer? How will this 'confession' affect their future relationship? Moreover, what is the relationship between medical professionals that support the so-called integrative medicine and those who do not? It would certainly be interesting to have a *pro et contra* discussion on the subject at the Medical Chamber of Slovenia.

Another instructive method that comes to my mind when talking about contributions to an improved culture of dialogue is mediation. Being one of them, I can confidently claim that the number of mediators in Slovenia is increasing, although the demand for our services is still scarce. The state has not done enough for the promotion of mediation as a successful way of conflict resolution, which is clearly reflected in the fact that people still prefer litigation to conversation and compromise. Using mediation could lead to a more peaceful settlement of disputes that does not leave any of the parties involved with a feeling that they had been deceived.

Finally, the culture of dialogue also carries weight in the realm of the written word. This can be observed in the media, as well as numerous other communicational forums. The written word too requires culture of dialogue and mutual respect of all persons involved. Educating young people and providing them with the necessary tools to defend their opinion in a respectful way is thus of paramount importance if we wish to live in the world where hatred is to become a thing of the past.

The Time for Change is at Our Doorstep

Matjaž Hanžek
Former Human Rights Ombudsman of the Republic of Slovenia (2001-2007)

The current multidimensional global crisis – financial, economic, social, environmental, etc. – is also a consequence of the fact that individuals, who only care about their own welfare measured in the size of their personal material wealth, have kidnapped our lives. Assisted by corrupt politicians, they hijacked and usurped national economies and societies, arbitrarily determined our needs and wants, and soon they might become the supreme lords of our livelihoods. One percent of the global population dominates the lives of the other ninety-nine percent. In other words, in spite of free elections, in spite of all the checks and balances in contemporary democratic societies, a tiny minority exerts absolute control over the destiny of the majority.

How can this be possible? Did we really voluntarily opt into a new system of slavery of the third millennium? Were we aware of this during the decades in which corrupt individuals were inconspicuously taking over the levers of political power that determines the future of billions? These are only some of the questions that people in Slovenia and all over the world ask themselves when protesting, more or less vigorously, against the way of life we did not choose. At the same time, we seek for ways to more justly distribute the immense material wealth that we, as people, have acquired through our knowledge and work.

As the crisis prolongs, governments continue to reduce social welfare, limit the rights of patients, impose tuition fees that only allow access to quality education for the rich, limit the duration of maternity leave, and lower unemployment benefits. Therewith, political elites are gradually abolishing the welfare state that we were – interestingly enough – able to finance even when our gross domestic product was lower than it is today. We were convinced that the rapid growth of our economies we would live more comfortable and better lives, yet the reality is entirely different. We believed that increased production would eradicate poverty because it would allow us to satisfy, without great sacrifices on our part, the basic needs of those who for various reasons cannot take care of themselves and their families. Nevertheless, the number of people in need who

depend on the assistance of different humanitarian organizations has never been higher. This is the diagnosis of progress gone wrong!

How come that today the most important decisions are made by a small circle of privileged individuals, even though our democratic systems are based on the sovereignty of the people's will? Truth be told, the tendencies to limit formal freedom are becoming stronger by the day, the constraints on the use of referenda in Slovenia being a clear example thereof. I personally believe that we have let ourselves be seduced by the material comfort as a substitute for actual freedom and democracy. An abundance of supermarkets filled with material goods replaced the actual decisions that affect our lives. We have been deceived that the possibility to choose among countless types of toothpaste and other products represents democracy. And we have left the *real* decision making to a handful of irresponsible and greedy individuals.

Active citizenship that enables us to control our destinies has been forgotten. We have indulged in the temporary comfort of consumerism because it was apparently easier and less stressful to do so and because it did not demand from us any substantial cognitive effort. 'Others will figure this out, they are smarter than us anyways' we thought. But we were wrong.

The future can only be taken back in our hands in two ways. The first one is a violent one. When masses are driven to the brink of survival and have nothing else to lose but their miserable lives, they revolt. As Marx puts it in the Communist Manifesto, proletarians have nothing to lose in a revolution but their ball and chain; but they can win the world. Unfortunately, such revolutions almost as a rule lead to a spiral of violence and destruction and deprive generations of significant improvements of their living conditions.

Violence, however, is not the only solution. There are other tools that can be used to achieve the transformation of an unjust social system – knowledge. In Bertold Brecht's words, '[a] book is a weapon, pick it up and use it!'. Books represent a repository of knowledge piled up through centuries of human development. This knowledge was formed by endless debates and exchanges of manifold arguments about the truth that the individual knew at a given historical moment. It is only through the 'wars of words' and with the weapon of knowledge that humanity was able to advance – to the first leap on the Moon and beyond.

Avoiding the 'Slippery Slope'

Dona Kosturanova,
President of Youth Educational Forum

We are slowly but surely heading towards a society in which high school students will undoubtedly be able to outdebate the average MP or public person. For a person coming from a debate organization, my everyday life entails practicing the rules of debate. What I and other young people at YEF get to see are diametrical opposites: where more and more young debaters enroll in the debate program and outdo their peers each year, but also when a glance at the society they live in shows debate and culture of dialogue heading towards extinction. There are moments when it feels that these two things are happening simultaneously, yet in two different worlds.

Searching for Arguments

The word 'debate' has been stigmatized due to its improper use and poor practice in our shared public media space. At this point, I can confidently (but unfortunately) say that no single debate show airs on Macedonian TV.

The term 'debate' has been vulgarized with being used for talk shows, interviews, open studios, and political shows, by both speakers and hosts. In these discussions, there is little or no attention spent on equal time-distribution to ensure fairness, motions are merely broad general topics, interrupting speakers in an inappropriate manner is unavoidable. Furthermore, this 'debate' only happens in the rare cases where persons with somewhat opposing opinions will be found at the same venue.

I would like to describe an evening show priding itself on sparking public debate. This show hosts a pallet of speakers that all share similar convictions and the only thing that allows one to tell them apart is their profession. The host would blurt out some general topics and the guests would try to outtalk each other by adding segments missed by every previous speaker, throwing in a few inside jokes, and leaving the studio taking pride in having just debated on national television. This, however, would still be fine, if this were not one of the few 'debate' shows, and one of the most viewed ones – due to its prime time airing.

Looking at the style of communication of the people that owe debate to the public the most, namely, politicians, one comes closer to the root cause. I think one of the last 'debates' took place in 2009 prior to the presidential election. Interestingly enough, the candidate from the ruling party did not show up at the event but later on nonetheless won the election. Sadly, this was one of the very few attempts at organizing a proper presidential debate.

What is left, or at least conveniently tolerated by political parties, is the hope that important questions will be discussed either in closed meetings or indirectly through the media; but never through public dialogue. The culture of public discussion has been twisted into monologues at press conferences, rallies, and guest appearances. In this context, 'debate' only takes form in publicized reactions and 'counter-press conferences', but never in a discussion at a common table.

When Logical Fallacies Become Compulsory When Preparing a Speech

I would not like to come across as a debate puritan, a person believing that only strict formats and concise structure are the makeup of a debate. However, such forms of debate, particularly in more formal situations, should be practiced too. If for nothing more, to assist in structured opinion building, in fair discussion, in constructive communication, and in valuing different opinions.

Once the practice of such values has been established, timers in talk shows would become obsolete because speakers would understand their duty in hearing out the other side without interruption. But we are not there yet. We live in a society where public communication is flooded with more logical fallacies than solid arguments.

How Could One Want Something One Have Never Seen

Due to the quality of debate (or more adequately, the lack of it), the public feels less and less inclined to see more of it. What is frightening is the preconceived belief that a debate could not influence one's opinion. In order to move away from this position, debate and its values have to be practiced to the point where a broad standard will be made, and expectations would have to be fulfilled.

After the last parliamentary election, where, as one might guess, no debate occurred, a group of debaters organized 'The Debate That Never Happened',

taking up random sides and debating in favour of the various positions of the four leading political parties.

With the idea of seeing if we could fill up a hall full of people to watch a debate, we started doing 'Argument: Organized Expression', a public debate hosting experts, politicians, journalists, and other public figures clashing arguments on a preset motion in a defined format. These events seemed promising. The interest of citizens, particularly of the youth, was there. Public figures were also willing to engage and to take up the challenge of debating on a motion they had an opinion on. Media aired the event after it happened, and the stream teams were happily staring at the growing numbers. The hashtag was buzzing with tweets.

So if a group of young people, debaters, and activists could do it, where are the obstacles? The trend needs to be acknowledged by others – practiced by show hosts, encouraged by the media, valued in the assembly.

From Textbooks to Real Life

Maybe we are still a long way from seeing someone sincerely accepting a flaw in their argument after an opponent's rebuttal, but we are not far away from valuing a backed up claim, an educated argument, a respectable speaker.

We know debate builds critical thinking, clarifies goals, challenges assumptions, recognizes hidden values, verifies evidence, values accomplishments, and seeks conclusions. Critical thinking is what makes a difference between '*He showed him they have no right to speak'* and *'He avoided the topic of discussion and attempted to attack the opponent stating he has nothing to talk to about with a person like him'.* Critical thinking is what makes us check the background of a sensationalist story or wonder about the absence of its sources. It is what makes us respect an opinion different from our own. And it makes us want to know more and build conclusions by analyzing *all* aspects of a particular topic.

Debate changes lives. It is hard to be apathetic once you've experienced it.

Teaching Democracy

Roxana Marin
Romanian Human Rights Activist

> *Democracy does not give the people the most skillful*
> *government, but it produces [...] an all-pervading and*
> *restless activity, a superabundant force, and an energy*
> *which is inseparable from it and which may, however*
> *unfavorable circumstances may be, produce wonders.*
> *Alexis de Tocqueville,* Democracy In America

Romanian democracy is still very young, and one of the biggest problems it has is that it does not offer young people sufficient alternatives to formal education. Although important inroads have been made in the last decade or so, civic participation, awareness, and interest in the country's or planet's social issues is still perceived at the mainstream level as something that is copied after the West.

Romanians' poor participation in public processes and decision-making is a weakness that has its roots in communism, when the people were told, rather than invited to participate. Many Romanians *still* consider it solely the President's or government's responsibility to address issues such as mismanagement of resources, embezzlement of funds, institutionalized corruption, inadequate medical care, marginalization of the Roma/Gypsies, long-term environmental damage posed by unchecked growth, the havoc in our dysfunctional Parliament. Many people see themselves as non-actors and take virtually no personal responsibility for the public good.

Addressing non-participation from the bottom of the social pyramid, it is highly imperative to help people, especially young people, internalize that change starts at the individual level. People must indeed be the change they want to make. Formal and informal education programs, organizing youth clubs, competitions and festivals, setting up support and action groups inside and outside formal institutions, establishing publications, e-groups and websites: these are all activities that do not propose to impact change overnight, but will gradually change one individual or small group at a time. There is only small issue with that outlook in Romania: policy makers and the formal system of education have yet to demonstrate true allegiance to the defense of human

rights or the internationally much-praised non-formal education. There are many formal activities, even competitions and festivals, that the authorities organize to 'encourage' alternative education – but, sadly, this is mostly still for show, and when human rights activists actively promote equality for different minorities in their classes or classes they are invited to speak to, they often get in trouble with the central authorities.

Despite the lack of firm action from the central authorities in support of real human rights issues, rather than declarative meows that sound much like the former communist tirades, more and more educators and youth associations are embracing a philosophy of education and youth work that is based on the idea that the development of a young person, and respect for his/her peers, is built outside formal education *at least* in an equal proportion as inside it. An ever increasing number of partnerships between schools and universities on the one hand and nongovernmental associations on the other are spawning a generation, whose interest and participation in social issues is definitely more vocally expressed and more coherently coordinated at the action level, a generation that is not shy and organizes fundraising events for Syrian refugees or protests against fracking, etc. The members of this new generation, whose opportunities to develop and learn about themselves and the world have come mostly from outside the formal system of education, are constantly giving feedback to the system so it can embrace the fact that alternative methods of education are not in conflict with formal education – but rather something that can compensate for its lacks, and in a grandly productive way.

Alternative education contributes to the making of citizens that are aware and receptive, as well as of a few advocates for human rights causes. With past generations deeply entrenched in a mentality of being provided for by the state, contact with an independent, rational, and autonomous ways of doing things is imperative and can be provided for through extracurricular pursuits of the mind.

Dialogue in the Cultural Context

Elena Mihajlova
Faculty of Law 'Iustinianus Primus', Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje

In pursuit of new bases for liberal justice, action of intellectual and political movements led by various groups such as national minorities, indigenous peoples, old and new migrants, feminists, green activists, and the like, the modern day multicultural societies assign great importance to problem-solving and conflict-resolution. It is likely that at the root of any complex, potentially volatile issue/problem we will find communication failures and cultural misunderstandings that prevent the parties from framing the problem in a common way, and thus make it impossible to deal with the problem constructively.

Clearly, we need ways of improving our thought processes and dialoguing, especially in groups where the solution depends on people reaching at least a common formulation of the problem. In that sense, dialogue has considerable promise as a problem-formulation and problem-solving philosophy. Moreover, dialogue is necessary as a vehicle for understanding cultures and subcultures and that organizational learning will ultimately depend upon such cultural understanding. Due to these reasons, dialogue becomes a central element of any model of organizational transformation, and is indispensable in multicultural societies.[28]

Dialogue aims to build a group that can think generatively, creatively, and – most importantly – together. When dialogue works, the group can achieve levels of creative thought that no one would have initially imagined. Thus, dialogue is a vehicle for creative problem identification and problem solving. The assumption is that we will become more conscious of how our thought process works; we will think better collectively and communicate better. The

---

[28] For more details on dialogue, culture and organizational learning, see Schein, E.H., 'On Dialogue, Culture, and Organizational Learning', *Reflections*, 4(4) 2003, www.solonline.org/reflections.

group will reach a higher level of consciousness and creativity through gradual creation of a 'commonly acceptable' thinking process.[29]

In this process, we do not convince each other, but build a common experience base that allows us to learn collectively. The closer the group comes to such a collective understanding, the easier it becomes to reach decisions, and the more likely it will be that decision will be implemented in the way the group meant it.

Dialogue's role in culture is of particular significance. When we operate as cultural carriers and are conscious of our cultural membership, we are emotionally attached to our culturally learned categories of thought. This is how we value them and protect them as an aspect of our group/collective identity. One of the ways that groups, communities, and other units that develop subcultures define themselves and set their psychological boundaries is by developing a language. Using that language expresses membership and belonging and that – in turn – provides status and identity.

In other words, powerful motivational forces are at work, and these forces make us cling to our language and our thought process even if we recognize that they are biased and block communication. We often feel that our biases are the correct ones and thus make ourselves impervious to other views. If we value our group, we feel that others should learn 'our language'. In addition, the familiar categories of thought provide meaning, comfort, and predictability – things we all seek. Given these forces, we should not be surprised if groups made up of members of different cultures and subcultures have difficulty communicating with each other, even if they speak the same mother tongue, and even if they are motivated for trying to understand each other.[30]

Learning across cultural boundaries cannot be created or sustained without initial and periodical dialogue. Therefore, dialogue in some form is necessary and integral to any organizational learning that involves going beyond the cultural status quo. The truth is that communities learn within the set of assumptions that characterizes their present culture and subcultures. However, if any new organizational responses are needed that involve changes in cultural

---

[29] Simon, H., *Models of Thought, Vols. 1 and 2*. Yale University Press, 1979.
[30] Isaacs, W., 'Dialogue: The Power of Collective Thinking', *The Systems Thinker* 4, 1993

assumptions or learning across subcultural boundaries, dialogue must be viewed as an essential component of such learning.[31]

The ultimate goal of learning about theory and practice of dialogue is that it facilitates and creates new possibilities for valid communication. If we did not need to communicate in groups, then we would not need to work on dialogue. But if problem-solving and conflict-resolution in groups is increasingly important in our complex world, then the skill of dialogue becomes one of the most fundamental human skills.[32] Finally, this skill allows us to approach cultural differences in the spirit of multiculturalism, and make it the source of great creative opportunities.

---

[31] See also Friedman, Maurice S. *Martin Buber: The Life of Dialogue* 4th ed. Routledge, London and New York, 2002.

[32] See Suter, Keith, "The Way That You Say It", *Conflict Resolution Network*, www.crnhq.org.

In Defense of Classroom Debate – An Insider's Perspective

Jernej Podgornik
Slovenian High School Philosophy and Sociology Professor, a Dedicated Ambassador of Debate on a Global Scale

It seems as if the postmodern society has found itself at the crossroads of the unknown, with many challenges to overcome. Demographic changes, global warming and related environmental issues, unequal accessibility to food and natural resources, unbalanced distribution of social power and wealth, famine and wars; all these are just a few of the issues that modern society needs to confront with. The tension between different groups and interests seems bigger now than ever before and the power of capital still divides the world's poor and wealthy, despite the fact that we are the most ardent defenders of freedom, equality, liberal values, and democracy in history.

The majority of problems listed above originate from the misunderstanding of important matters, or merely from the forgetting of the distinction between right and wrong. In other words, we are facing a lack of education. The solutions for such complex issues of course cannot be simple, but they can have a start in education. Looking at the past and saying that the educational system has failed us would be a very pessimistic and non-constructive approach to the solving of the problems of modern society. The key answer lies in the revaluation of all levels of education, setting up new approaches and goals based on past good practices in the context of global and active citizenship as two guidelines for all levels of teaching. Understanding global and active citizenship means having the willingness to understand and learn from experiences of others, it means motivation for young people to take action for effective change. It translates into sensibility for wider society and the affirmation of proper values. It also means deeper understanding of current events in the world, which is also one of the key solutions to many problems of contemporary society.

Introducing debate in the classroom is one of the approaches that can achieve better understanding of the world in terms of global and active citizenship. Compared to standard lectures, debate involves students directly, which means they find themselves in the middle of the situation or a problem that requires a solution. While lecturing already proposes some solutions, which, however, are

not necessarily the most apt ones, debate forces young people to think and brainstorm. The outcome is a range of fresh ideas that can be quite independent from any directed lectures in the classroom. Involving young people in a debate means engaging them and giving them a sense of responsibility for the topic being discussed in the classroom. Students therefore become more attentive, especially when the topic is being discussed or lectured by one of them. The second advantage of this approach is the nature of debate, which as a method demands very concrete solutions for issues being discussed and thus additionally incentivizes active participation in the classroom.

Expressing opinions is a further significant advantage of classroom debates. In contrast, the classic educational model – in which the content is lectured *ex cathedra* – very often does not have a form that would facilitate students' expression of their own opinions in real-time; rather, the discussion sparkling from a lecture usually takes place after the lesson. By expressing opinions, students reveal their point of view on the subject matter, which usually results in conveying and discussing personal values that are important to them – the former being of utmost importance to the educational system, especially when talking about active and global citizenship and reaffirming the proper values.

One of the goals of active and global citizenship is also learning from each other and understanding different points of view in terms of tolerance, acceptance and multicultural dialogue. When teaching for mutual dialogue, we cannot overlook debate as an ideal platform for bridging the clashes of different opinions while at the same time creating an environment for young people to learn how to structure their ideas in the most reasonable way by gaining public speaking skills.

One of the very seminal parts of debating in the classroom is doing research while preparing for a debate. Thereto, students need to do some prior homework and prepare debating materials in advance, which brings huge benefits. The first advantage of prior research is that students gradually learn how to acquire information, where to look for it, thereby developing a sense for the distinction between correct and misleading information, which is of vital importance for any kind of social activism or participation. The second advantage is that they learn so many additional things that cannot be done in the classroom; they become more sensible for the challenges and issues of the world and society around them.

When introducing debate in the classroom, we have to be aware that this is a long term learning process that can be very time consuming, especially in the beginning. We need to build it up gradually, step by step. Hence, in the beginning we need to use something really simple, like a debate game or a really short debate format. Motions for debating have to be short and conceptually simple; the complexity of the motion should be introduced gradually. Students also need to know some basic debate skills (e.g., structure of an argument, refutation of an argument), while being made aware that these skills will gradually be improving in order for them not to lose motivation.

Debate as a method in the classroom can be used in very different ways and at various stages of the lessons. It can be an ideal icebreaker or intro for motivating students. Teachers can conduct debates in the classroom prior to moving onto a different subject matter in order to inquire which areas of the subject require more in-depth explanation and which are already known. That saves a lot of time and the chances of repeating already known facts therefore become smaller. Debate can be used in the middle or at the end of a particular subject matter, which are both crucial stages in the education process – teachers want to be sure that everybody understands the lecture and it is also a great opportunity for students to ask questions, make comments, etc. With debate, we also put the lecture in a very real-life context, which is significant in order for students to see that classroom lectures are not detached from reality but rather reflect it.

There are many ways of introducing debate in the classroom and they mostly depend on the teachers' and students' wishes. There are several classroom debate formats: mini debate formats (short formats) that can be used for deeper analysis, longer debate formats, roundtable debates, simulations, role playing, or debate games. It does not really matter which one we use, the important thing is that a debate takes place and that it is guided by a teacher, especially in the beginning. In addition, it is of crucial importance that the rules are the same for everybody, that we are increasing the complexity and difficulty of debates gradually, and that the debates we conduct follow a purpose we would like to fulfill.

In the wide array of challenges and opportunities we face today, we need to accept the fact that the shape and form of our future society depends heavily on the quality of our education system. Educated young people with proper values

should lead the way forward, which is why our focus needs to be on improving the conditions and ways of education. We have to upgrade the existing practices with fresh and new ideas of teaching with different methods and ways of learning.

Debate as a method in the classroom is a different and effective way of teaching for democratic dialogue; it is a platform for proposing unique ideas and solutions. It gives an opportunity to express opinions and brings out the importance of global activism. At the same time, young people learn about the differences in opinions, they have a better understanding of what active social participation and global citizenship mean, their sensibility for the world around them increases, and they learn the importance of tolerant dialogue as a key solution to any compromise needed in the future.

Therefore, in order to reach a fair future via a sustainable transition, we need to rely on good and quality education.

Why Debate in Education?

Prof. Gordana Siljanovska –Davkova, Ph.D.
Faculty of Law 'Iustinianius Primus', Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje

Debate and education are like 'Siamese twins', one cannot exist without the other. Debate brings down the wall between teachers and students and replaces it with a bridge. Debate is a conversation, a dialogue, an argument, and has been this since the times of Socrates and Aristotle.

Debate reveals that a curious student is hidden in any good teacher, just as a hopeful, potential teacher is hidden in a good student. They interchangeably assume the roles of Robinson Crusoe and Friday. A teacher that prefers debate is much better at coordination than dictation; speaks, but is also an attentive listener; teaches and learns at the same time.

A student, however, is not a living sponge that soaks in and memorizes data and absolute 'truths', but a person who questions, contents, negates, confirms, argues, criticizes, and infers conclusions. If an active mind creates and a passive mind memorizes, then it is better to foster curious, restless, and disobedient students instead of quiet listeners, future walking-talking encyclopaedias. Debate holds the promise of an intellectual drama and the cure for monologue narratives; it discourages ex-cathedra lectures and replaces them with interactive games, simultaneously transforming the classroom into a modern, peripatetic school.

The art of debating can be compared to the art of loving (Fromm), as they are not given, but skills learned through ardent and persistent exercise at home, in kindergartens and schools, at universities, formally and informally, according to written or unwritten rules, ethical or legal norms.

Debate is the *conditio sine qua non* and a guarantee for educating a *zoon politikon* who wishes and knows how to live in a community that listens and respects his/her words and vice versa.

Debate is impossible in the absence of mutual respect between the parent and the child, the teacher and the student. It is Voltaire's play and not *ad hominem* battle, encouraging 'the other' and his/her different thinking. Debate does not recognize offended and violated, winners and losers, but equal knights, armed

with the most powerful weapon of all – arguments. By practicing and fostering debate we build a culture of dialogue, encourage critical thought, stimulate free expression and responsibility for words uttered.

Debate makes sense among different-minded people, and thus learning and practicing debate means learning and practicing tolerance. Different opinions stimulate the mind and speed of thought and their result is always fruitful.

Those who have lived through the debate educational drama are much more prepared to become a Russo-like citizen than those growing up in a monologue educational incubator. Those who were educated by means of debate are prepared to bravely and freely express and defend their positions, are critical towards all phenomena, processes, relations and institutions. Once they complete their education, these students become 'dialogue addicts' and consider it to be a successful instrument and method for the performance of working or political obligations, in that insisting on political and inter-party debate, parliamentary debate, court debate, while refusing to become obedient members of the party, the authorities or the leader, and fighting against egocentrism, authoritarianism, totalitarianism and tsarism.

They will always remember their youth debates during the education process, the teachers who promoted and supported debates, the colleagues with whom they debated.

I believe that education, in addition to love, is the greatest life challenge of any person. I believe in debate's positive effects on the mind and knowledge.

Teachers' narcissism can be frustrating in the search for answers to the myriad of questions raised by pupils and students, and captures their own, but also the minds of others. I am convinced that dialogue and debate open an endless field for competition of ideas and views of thinking people! I am happy that 'my' former and current students from the Youth Educational Forum share the same opinion. I admit to have learned a lot from them!

Establishing a Culture of Dialogue in Formal and Informal Education

Prof. Slagana Taseva, Ph.D.
Member of the International Academic Committee at the International Anti-Corruption Academy in Vienna, President of Transparency International – Macedonia

My years-long experience of work in the civil society sector, both in the capacity of a professor and a member of a nongovernmental organization that advocates for transparency, responsibility, and accountability on the part of institutions and individuals engaged in the provision of public services, I was faced with a myriad of situations implying openness for conversation and debate. My experiences are different and primarily related to the situation in the Republic of Macedonia, but I also had the privilege and responsibility of taking part in the debate led within the international community, as a member of different international organizations and bodies.

Among other things, I had the pleasant opportunity to participate in the establishment of the International Anti-Corruption Academy with the seat in Vienna, Austria. This institution is formed as an international organization, whose Founding Agreement was endorsed by more than 50 countries in September 2011, in the presence of Mr. Ban Ki Moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations. I also have the honour of being a member (I am serving my second term in office) of the International Academic Committee tasked with preparing all the documents upon which this institution was established as an international higher education institution.

The Academy is accredited by the Parliament of Austria by means of special law and its diplomas are internationally recognized. The Academy's establishment – the development of Master studies and the special courses curricula that would accommodate the cultural specifics (some societies do not recognize the term corruption), various state systems, the organizational set-up for fight against corruption, the level of societies' freedom from corruption (Hong Kong, Finland, Norway), and the theoretical and scientific understanding of corruption and their incorporation in legal norms – was a major challenge for the International Academic Committee. The Committee was asked to study these differences and identify common grounds that would serve as starting point for curricula development.

Today, the Anti-Corruption Academy is a successful institution. The first class of master students from all parts of the world attend lectures delivered by renowned professors and practitioners in the fields of psychology, philosophy, political sciences, law, economy, as well as business and communications. At the time of its establishment, the main precondition for the Academy's success was to secure the quality of the teaching staff and curricula. Teachers are not full-time employees of the Academy, but are engaged due to their quality and achievements. Parties to the Agreement and those that financially support the Academy are not entitled to nominate teaching staff or participate in the selection of prospective students. These decisions are taken pursuant to criteria previously agreed through dialogue and debate.

My discussion on the establishment of culture of dialogue in formal and informal education in the Republic of Macedonia is presented in the second part of this text, due to my desire to open this brief paper with a positive example.

Here, I advocate for the establishment of a culture of integrity, in its true meaning and with all elements implied by the complexity of the term. For years now, the integrity of the University as an institution is under threat due to the lack of integrity on the part of its individual members and constituent units, teaching and scientific councils, dean administrations, departments, etc. They are no longer hubs of debate on science and criteria, but are based on interests. There are no argument-based discussions to contest the appointment of a teacher whose PhD thesis is not in the field of science where he is elected, let alone about the quality of reviewing scholar works and papers. Moreover, nobody dares to express a reserved opinion, let alone criticism for somebody's PhD thesis, despite the obvious lack of innovation or major disregard for academic standards observed in the given work/paper.

This should be the starting point, i.e. from cultivating integrity of each and every individual involved in the teaching process and management of institutions. Efforts are needed to prevent politically motivated dismissals and appointments of deans, even in cases when relevant appointment procedures are completed in compliance with relevant existing legal provisions. Only then can we demand integrity from students. They should not be blamed for being exposed to complete and utter deterioration of the quality of teaching, knowing that teachers are in pursuit of higher numbers of classes and thus have no time to

review seminar and master papers commissioned by placing notices on bulletin broads.

Only after we can openly discuss these issues, can we unconditionally claim that the culture of dialogue and debate truly exists in education. Until that moment becomes reality, it would be better for us to study and see what happens in the field of informal education. Informal education has become the arena for developing quality, particularly because there is market-driven competitiveness based not on the issuance of diplomas and grades, but on the provision of quality curricula that facilitate knowledge and learning. Often, this form of education offers better quality compared to formal education.

In sum, when quality and knowledge become common interests of all parties involved in the education process, conditions will be ripe for dialogue and debate. Until then, we should look beyond our institutions and see what other states with quality education systems are doing to foster and advance dialogue and debate. I would not enroll in any of our universities today, because individuals with integrity are an exception rather than the rule and they still lack the power and the critical mass to fight against personal interests and non-quality.

Conversation, Dialogue, and the Socratic Lesson

Prof. Boris Vezjak, Ph.D.
Faculty of Arts, University of Maribor

Dialogue is always underutilized. This seems to be everyone's publicly acclaimed demand. No one believes that there is too much of it. Dialogue represents a capacity that is sincerely missed in our social and political communication. However, those that note its absence publicly, often have to face criticism that they themselves do not engage in dialogue enough. One can thus quickly find himself/herself in a situation of general consensual declaratoriness regarding dialogue that seems highly suspicious – we all support it, yet everyone misses it when it comes to us and we miss it when it comes to others! Putting it simply, there are several conceptual and communicational misunderstandings that relate to the comprehension of dialogue and its concrete practice. Dialogue is like cleverness – we are well pleased with our own levels of it and highly dissatisfied when it comes to others.

Dialogue à la *Socrates*

Socrates represents the point of departure for any discussion about dialogue understood not as a mere exchange of opinions and positions but, fundamentally, as a skill of argumentation and the seeking of philosophical truths. Socrates believed that a certain discovery would always be a product of verbal exchange. This belief is grounded in the notion of *logos*, an expression of great significance and wide usage in the world of Ancient Greece where it denoted speech, a word, sentence, statement, definition, argument, meaning, and even the divine principle. For Socrates, conversation represented an exchange of such words; insomuch as this word was meaningful, represented a statement, or an argument. As he wandered the Athenian squares he engaged in verbal exchanges with other people, looking precisely for such *logos*, i.e. the meaning others' statements.

To Socrates, *logos* was generally essential for philosophizing. *Logos* indicates an 'orderly word' and hence appears in conversations with others. The noun *dia-logos* originates from the verb *dialegein* and represents a product of speech – conversation. Furthermore, the expression 'dialectics' also originates from the

word 'dialogue'. In a sense, it would be meaningful to ask what comparative function might the notion of dialectics serve when discussion intercultural dialogue. In what respects is the latter similar to or different from Socratic dialectics? It is held that dialectics is the skill of conversing as envisaged by Ancient Greek philosophers. It is a skill that pushes one into striving for definitive and meaningful knowledge. It is the opposite of sophistic rhetoric and oratorship, where the ultimate goal is merely to persuade the other speaker, regardless of the weight and truthfulness of a particular statement. This is the most common dichotomy found in discussions on Socratic dialectics – the latter is juxtaposed with rhetoric and sides with philosophy. With an exchange of arguments and positions through conversation, dialectics strives for a certain philosophical discovery. Rhetoric, to the contrary, is focused merely on persuasion and making a determining impression on the public. The former seeks the truth, the latter yearns for a different goal – to create a mock image of truth – and is satisfied with false impressions about knowledge that it produces. While dialectics is philosophical, rhetoric is sophistical.

Socrates' motivation for the seeking of wisdom and his impulse to discover knowledge is well known. He wanted to verify, research, and also negate Delphi's statement that he was the wisest among Ancient Greeks. The reaction to this statement became part and parcel of his philosophical mission to figure out what wisdom was and why he was to be the wisest. One could claim that in this case the path to finding a wiser person was in fact a path of seeking the value of Socrates' own wisdom. This model is clearly visible in the Socratic principle of 'self-realization'. When searching for people wiser than himself, he will also realize who he is and why his philosophical posture is his own. Socrates' insistence on dialectics as a 'living word' additionally explains why he never produced anything in written form. As stated in the *Phaedrus* dialogue, writing is similar to painting. When something is written down, it reaches many people – those that possess certain knowledge as well as those that do not. When the latter mistreat written words, those words, as Socrates puts is, would need a father to defend them. The written word, as opposed to the spoken one, therefore does not enable its author to defend it, often simply because he or she is not present when the word is mistreated. There is, however, an even more metaphysical reason. Speech possesses a soul says Socrates, the soul of the author that can defend it. On the other hand, written words are merely an image

of speech (*Phaedrus* 276a). A written word is less truthful than what it actually stands for, just like a painting is less truthful than the object it depicts.

Dialogue and conversation are essentially 'verbal' and unwritten. According to Socrates, written materials are not authentic enough – the absence of the author and the fact that they are mere replicas of what is original and spoken makes them less worthy. The above-described 'live' method (one could also characterize it as a method of 'live philosophizing') led him to the decision never to write down any of his thoughts. The cross-examination of the other speaker in order to extract from him a certain discovery corresponds with the meaning of the word 'method' in Ancient Greek – a path that leads to the final goal, a way of seeking the ultimate truth hidden in *logos*. Hence, in the present context a *method* has to be understood in its original sense; it is an examination of the other speaker's knowledge and wisdom through questioning. Such an examination was always a difficult one, not only in terms of content but also in a psychological sense. Socrates' discussion partners in the Dialogues of Plato did not pass his examinations. They rather admitted that they did not possess the knowledge Socrates sought and indirectly revealed their own vanity. Such situations are a part of our everyday lives. We have all encountered persons that in a given situation turned out to be unknowledgeable even though we previously believed in their self-proclaimed knowledgeableness and wisdom.

As demonstrated, the Socratic notion of dialectics is precise and entails a number of elements that are foreign to contemporary conceptions of political conversation. In the context of the latter, one does not strive for philosophical knowledge and an important question is what exactly is such knowledge being replaced with. Political and cultural dialogue cannot be intended for conversation purely for the sake of the conversation itself. It cannot be an empty discussion and it has to follow certain rules. Surely, it must be an exchange of knowledge, experiences, and positions that leads to a mutual enrichment of knowledge of all participants in the conversation. How does this differ from the contemporary political discourse? The great Aristotle correctly posited that the 'dialectical technique' originates from the Socratic method. For this disciple of Plato, dialectics is primarily a method that serves to *define* things. In his examinations, Socrates looks for notional elucidations; for example, he wishes to discover an answer to the question 'What is justice?' and therein resorts to the method of posing questions and providing answers. The line

between dialectics as understood by Socrates on the one hand and Plato on the other is not clear. Plato believed that there are many approaches to acquiring a definition of things, for example, by distinguishing things with few commonalities and composing those with many. The 'compartmentalization' based on such distinctions and divisions rests precisely on the principle that is hidden in the very process of acquiring a definition of things. If, for example, we ask ourselves what a human being is, then our starting point is the larger group (or class) of things to which a human being could belong – such as all living organisms. While Plato offers us several broader definitions of dialectics, it is certain that conversation (in the form of posing questions, providing answers, and refuting these answers) is a Socratic innovation. A socially contextualized dialogue most probably does not reflect such an idea of dialectics; its primary ambition is certainly not a scientific exploration and definition of notions. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the demand for the quest for common knowledge is therewith rendered irrelevant. But what is the nature of such knowledge and how are we supposed to discover it?

Conversation and Refutation

In the context of seeking the ultimate 'truth' or a discovery through conversation, it is difficult to imagine a situation where one would introduce particular methodological strictness in questioning others or even in refuting their opinions. On the other hand, however, dialogue nowadays presupposes a degree of reconciliation of differing positions and does not represent an empty, non-substantive exchange. If such reconciliation is demanded, then at least a partial relaxation of one's own position is included in such demands. This relaxation is the result of the 'refutation' of the other perspective.

Therefore, the ultimate discovery of the Socratic lesson on refutation is that knowledge progresses and that one of the partners in dialogue has to be wrong. Statements 'A' and 'not-A' cannot both be correct and if partners in dialogue argue in favour of two distinct positions, one of them will have to let go. It is precisely this relaxation of positions and the admission of one's own mistakes that represent the foundation of progress in philosophical discoveries. Refutation is not only a skill of the one that refutes, it is also the moral dignity of the one that is refuted – and it is up to the latter to acknowledge through the exchange of arguments his or her misbeliefs.

PRACTICING EDUCATION FOR
DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP AND
HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION
THROUGH DEBATE:

AIDS AND EXERCISES

The Architecture of International Human Rights Protection

Samo Novak, M.Sc., LL.M.
Freelance Researcher, Former Debater and Debate Trainer

Introduction

Human rights education represents one of the key pillars of national and international protection of human rights. After all, it is difficult to imagine individuals invoking their fundamental rights without actually knowing what they are, who is supposed to protect them, and where they can turn if their rights have been violated. Respect for individuals' fundamental rights and liberties represents the functional basis of any modern democracy. Moreover, respect for human rights has become an indispensable component of state sovereignty. In the past, this sacrosanct norm was defined merely in a negative sense, i.e. prescribing states not to interfere into each other's internal affairs. Today, however, protecting internationally guaranteed human rights in an integral function and *responsibility* of any sovereign state. Hence, all citizens should actively strive for making their governments act in line with those standards and promote respect for them all around the globe.

It is well beyond the scope of this manual to put forward detailed information on the development of human rights, their codification and content, and means of their implementation. Nonetheless, all educators/teachers/instructors that wish to delve deeper into the world of debate have to be aware that human rights topics are extremely popular on the 'debating scene' and that basic knowledge thereof is much desired if not necessary. The following pages provide a brief overview of the architecture of international human rights protection. After each topic, a series of questions is suggested that educators can discuss with their debaters. The purpose of these questions is to spark a 'debate before the debate' – to clarify various points of contention, to apply theory to practice, and to encourage critical thinking about human rights. The contribution concludes with a list of suggested reading that will assist debaters (as well as educators) in improving their understanding of one of the most important legal and political notions in contemporary societies.

The Development of the Notion of Human Rights

While used in various contexts and utilized in many different ways, human rights are essentially a legal concept. They refer to fundamental rights and freedoms that are bestowed upon individuals by the virtue of their personhood. In other words, every single one of us is entitled to such rights solely on the basis of the fact that we are *human*.

Historically speaking, different sources have been identified as the cradle of human rights. Written in the 18th century B.C., the CODE OF HAMMURABI already talked about the rights of all Babylonians to a fair trial, which encompassed the presumption of innocence and the rights to challenge with evidence the accusations against oneself. Another often-cited origin of human rights is the 1215 MAGNA CARTA LIBERTATUM that was drawn up in medieval England. This document limited the arbitrary authority of the despot and guaranteed individuals' access to justice. The Magna Carta also laid ground for the so-called legal writ of *habeas corpus*, which orders courts to examine the legality of one's detention. The notion of *habeas corpus* has become particularly significant in the context of the 'war on terror', in which countless individuals all around the world have been deprived of liberty without being given the opportunity to challenge such governmental action.

The most important philosophical developments with regard to human rights, however, came about in the New Ages. In the 17th century, the idea of NATURAL LAW promoted by legal scholars such as Hugo Grotius gained prominence. Natural law represents a system of laws that originate in nature and are thus universal and applicable to all. Such a conception of law was in line with the most fundamental concept of human rights, namely, that certain rights are inherent to human nature. Additionally, further developments of the notion of inherent rights were provided by ENLIGHTENMENT THINKERS such as John Locke, Voltaire, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. These philosophers, each in their own way, suggested that the transfer of individuals' powers to the state was not absolute but in fact conditioned by the state's responsibility to protect their most fundamental rights. The power of the state was therefore subject to certain limitations. Such ideas of universal rights were first translated into law at the national level by revolutionary movements of the 18th and 19th century, for example, into the French 1789 Declaration of Human and Civic Rights.

Nevertheless, the aforementioned developments can only be seen as a part of the contemporary conception of human rights. These rights were very patchy with regard to their scope (they mostly only dealt with life, liberty, and property), their beneficiaries (certain groups, such as women, children, foreigners, slaves, etc., were often excluded), and geographical reach (they only applied within a single country). It was only after the Second World War that human rights slowly began to take the shape and form in which we know them today. In this POST-1945 world, the fundamental tenets of human rights have been established: their attachment to *individuals*; their *universality*; and the fact that their violations are a matter of *international concern*. The establishment of the most important international organization, the United Nations (UN), represents a crucial event in the history of modern human rights. While Article 1 of the CHARTER OF THE UN sets the protection of human rights as one of the key goals of this organization, Article 2 states that its purpose is the promotion and encouragement of 'respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion'.

The UN was also the setting in which the most important international human rights document was adopted. On 10 December 1948, the UN General Assembly adopted the UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (UDHR). Although not legally binding, the declaration is of immense significance, as it reflects the skeletal content of contemporary international human rights law. It encompasses civil and political as well as social and economic rights. The fact that both groups of rights were included in the Declaration was the result of a compromise between the confronting political blocks, with the West supporting the former group of rights, and the communist East supporting the latter group. Following the adoption of UDHR began the (still ongoing) period of intensive international codification of human rights.

Discussion questions
In your opinion, why were the 'first human rights' not applicable to all people? How did the form of government (*despotism/oligarchy/monarchy/democracy*) *influence the development of human rights? What role did religion and religious leaders play?*
Read the UDHR. Are all rights laid down in the document universal today? Why (*not*)? *Take a look at which/how many countries adopted the UDHR. Would it be possible to adopt such a document in today's world comprised of 193 countries? Why* (*not*)?

International Codification of Human Rights

Internationally recognized human rights are guaranteed to individuals on the basis of treaties and conventions entered into by states. The CONSENT of a state to a specific right is therefore a necessary condition for that right to be legally protected in a given territory. Certain human rights, however, have been deemed as particularly fundamental and have to be respected by all states at all times, regardless of whether they have consented to them or not. Such rights are called PEREMPTORY NORMS or *jus cogens*. Only a few norms fall into this category, the most prominent being the prohibitions of genocide, torture, and slavery.

As mentioned, because the UDHR is not an international treaty and was not consented to through a special procedure called RATIFICATION by the countries that signed it, it is not a legally binding human rights instrument. Nonetheless, the high aspirations contained in the UDHR led to creation of numerous *binding* human rights treaties, at the global as well as at regional levels. The process of 'packaging' human rights into legally binding documents is called CODIFICATION and represents the most important part of the development of international human rights law.

At the global (sometimes also called 'universal') level, human rights treaties come into being under the auspices of the UN. Two of the most important general documents adopted within the framework of this organization are the 1966 INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS (ICCPR) and the 1966 INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS (ICESCR). As the names suggest, each of the Covenants deals with different rights. The ICCPR focuses on rights such as prohibition of torture, right to life, right to liberty and security of the person, freedom of movement, right to a fair trial, freedom of expression, freedom of association, and the right to family and privacy. On the other hand, the ICESCR deals with more programmatic rights such as the right to work, right to form trade unions, right to social security, right to health, right to education, and the right to take part in cultural life. Comparing the responsibilities that the Covenants confer upon states, it is evident how the ICCPR focuses on the *prohibition of interference in individuals' freedom*, while the ICESCR focuses on the *duty to provide individuals with particular services*.

Both Covenants include rather general rights. States, however, have also agreed upon a number of SPECIALIZED HUMAN RIGHTS TREATIES that lay out provisions dealing with very specific issues and/or pertain to particular groups of protected persons. These treaties were created because the international community considered certain human rights as particularly important and therefore decided to further compartmentalize them in order to enhance their protection. Hence, the core specialized conventions deal with specific topics such as racial discrimination, discrimination of women, prohibition of torture, rights of children, rights of migrant workers, rights of persons with disabilities, and protection from enforced disappearance.[33]

Codification of human rights has also taken place at the REGIONAL LEVEL. In Europe, this process started in 1949 with the establishment of the Council of Europe, an intergovernmental organization devoted to the promotion of human rights, democratic governance, and the rule of law. The organization's greatest achievement was the adoption of the EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (ECHR), also known as the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. The Convention includes a 'classical' set of civil liberties and is thus, in respect of its substance, similar to the ICCPR. In order to provide for the economic and social dimension of human rights, member states of the Council of Europe adopted the EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER in 1961. The charter focuses on positive rights and content-wise resembles the ICESCR.

Furthermore, the European Union (EU), an organization completely separate from the Council of Europe, has recently included a genuine human rights instrument in its legal corpus. The 2007 Lisbon Treaty provides reference to the CHARTER OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, which deals with all categories of human rights – civil, political, economic, and social. These rights are now an integral part of the EU's legal order, meaning that the Court of Justice of the European Union has the power to strike down any legislation *passed by EU institutions* that violates human rights specified in the Charter.

Some other regions of the world have also undertaken the task of enshrining human rights into law. In the Americas, the 1969 AMERICAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS was adopted under the auspices of the Organization of

---

[33] For a list of all UN human rights treaties see *www.treaties.un.org/Pages/Treaties.aspx?id=4.*

American States. In Africa, the 1981 AFRICAN CHARTER ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS was adopted within the framework of the Organization of African Unity (today known as the African Union) and has up to date been ratified by all of its member states except South Sudan. In the Asian and Oceanic region, however, perspectives on human rights are sharply diverging and no unified regional approach thereto has been able to develop.

Discussion Questions
In international relations, Western countries are usually strong proponents of civil and political rights, while Eastern countries put more emphasis on economic and social rights. Why is this the case? How is this reflected in the protection of human rights?
The African human rights instrument is the only one that refers not only to human but also to peoples' rights. Why? What does this say about the universality of human rights?
Imagine you are drafting your own human rights treaty. Which rights would you include therein and which ones would you leave out? Why?

Implementation of Human Rights

Human rights, although laid down in legally binding instruments, would be a toothless tiger without effective enforcement mechanisms that provide for their translation into social reality. It is of utmost importance to emphasize that *states are the key guardians of internationally recognized human rights*. States are the only actors that can enter into human rights treaty obligations and are thus also the only ones that can violate them. It is a common misbelief that individuals and other non-state actors – such as multinational corporations – can be bound by such obligations and infringe them.

The primary responsibility for the protection and respect of human rights therefore lies WITHIN THE STATE and applies to all three branches of government. First, the legislative has to pass good laws that are in consonance with the country's human rights obligations. Second, the executive has to make sure that the implementation of government policies does not violate applicable human rights standards. Quite a few states have established *National Human Rights Institutions*, which are tasked specifically with overseeing the work of the government in respect of human rights. Finally, and most importantly, national

courts at all instances are responsible for the judicial implementation of human rights. Courts serve as an indispensable check on the executive and act as a vital catalyst for future legislative change. For example, if a certain law is found to unjustifiably discriminate against a particular group of persons, it is the role of judges to specify which human rights violations take place thereby and how the legislative branch of government is to rectify the situation. Furthermore, victims of human rights violations necessarily have to take recourse to the national judiciary before attempting to secure justice before international courts or other international enforcement mechanisms. This rule is known as the requirement of *exhaustion of local remedies*.

The next important level of human rights protection is the INTERSTATE LEVEL. It is not only what happens within states that is important, but also what happens between them. Many dire human rights situations are being resolved at the diplomatic table, some with more and other with less success. Nonetheless, it is important to bear in mind that states with the worst human rights records will prefer to deal with situations that attract a lot of international attention 'behind closed doors', with representatives of other states. Sometimes, however, when diplomacy fails, the interstate approach can also be a forceful one. An example of this are HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTIONS, which refer to the use of military force in cases when states commit gross and systematic violations of human rights and do not respond to the calls of the international community to put an end to such behaviour. In the last decade, the notion of humanitarian intervention has gradually been replaced with that of RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT. According to this concept, the primary responsibility to protect and ensure human rights of its citizens lies within the state; however, if the state is unable or unwilling to do so, the international community assumes this responsibility. Blatant human rights violations thus become legitimate grounds for collective forceful action against the wrongdoing state.

It is worth mentioning that CIVIL SOCIETY AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS play an indispensable role in promoting of human rights *both* within the state and at the international level. They assist governments and intergovernmental organizations in raising awareness about pertinent human rights issues, they campaign and lobby for relevant legislative change, they cooperate with the media in highlighting human rights abuses, they produce invaluable 'shadow reports' on human rights situations in specific countries,

and they assist victims of human rights violations in bringing claims before relevant judicial bodies.

Human rights are also protected at the INTERNATIONAL LEVEL. Here, various organs of international organizations strive for a consistent implementation of human rights standards that are being developed under their auspices. Similarly to the abovementioned process of codification, enforcement of human rights – be it legal or political – can take place either at the global or at the regional level. While the UN is the most relevant organization in respect of the former level, the 'parent' organizations of regional human rights instruments are pertinent to the latter level.

Nowadays, human rights are an integral part of work of practically all UN institutions. There are, however, several organs whose work is directly related to the topic at hand. The first one is the UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL. Established in 2006 as the successor of the UN Commission on Human Rights, the Council represents an intergovernmental body comprised of 47 elected member states. Although only a political organ with no power to adopt legally binding resolutions, the Council performs certain very important functions. Arguably, the most significant one is the UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW. This is a special procedure whereby human rights situations in every single country in the world are thoroughly examined. Its unique value lies in the fact that it is truly universal and therefore provides for equal treatment of all countries. Moreover, because it is periodic, countries cannot avoid having their human rights records examined by all other members of the UN. Given such nature of the procedure, the Universal Periodic review represents an invaluable source of information for anyone interested in the human rights situation in a particular country.

The second significant political body is the OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (OHCHR). The High Commissioner is responsible for promoting and protecting the effective enjoyment of human rights everywhere. Her/his mandate includes providing countries with advisory, technical, and financial services aimed at improving the state of human rights at the national level.

The last important enforcement structure at the UN level is the TREATY BODY SYSTEM. This system is comprised of several quasi-judicial Committees that are responsible for the implementation of both Covenants and all specialized

human rights treaties (see section on codification above). Effectively, this means that every single UN human rights treaty also has its corresponding implementation mechanism. Members sitting on these Committees are not state representatives but fully independent experts. They perform various tasks such as oversight of the treaties (executed on the basis of reports submitted by governments), on-site visits and inquiries, and authoritative interpretations of the treaties themselves (referred to as General Comments). Furthermore, the Treaty Body System is particularly important because it can, subject to certain limitations, receive claims from individuals whose guaranteed rights had been violated and who have exhausted all available local remedies. Thus, when UN human rights treaties also include an INDIVIDUAL COMPLAINTS MECHANISM, the respective Committees evaluate whether the complaint is admissible and pass a quasi-judicial decision on the merits of the case.

Finally, all REGIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS REGIMES referred to in the previous section have also provided for the enforcement of their own legal instruments. Organization of American States and the African Union, for example, have established a bifurcated system that consists of a Commission and a Court of Human Rights. The most effective regime of human rights protection in the world, however, emerged under the auspices of the Council of Europe. One of the most important institutions of this organization, if not *the most* important one, is undoubtedly the EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS, which enforces the European Convention on Human Rights. All 47 member states of Council of Europe are parties to the Convention and consent to the jurisdiction of the Court. Although states parties can bring each other before the Court, the real value of this institution lies in the fact that it receives claims from *individuals* who wish to sue a state party for violating the Convention. Decisions laid down by the Court are legally binding on all parties to the litigation.

Discussion Questions
Imagine a country where torture is systematically practiced as a method of gathering evidence. You are the representative of an international non-governmental organization and are about to meet the Minister of Interior of the country in question. What arguments would you use to convince him/her to stop practicing torture? What advice would you give to torture victims seeking reparations for the harms they have suffered?
Although human rights issues are high on the agenda of the international community, serious abuses of individuals' fundamental rights are part of everyday life in many

countries. Why? Is the problem in the inappropriateness/ineffectiveness/redundancy of the system of human rights protection or somewhere else?

The use of military force often results in numerous violations of human rights. Is it legitimate to use force to protect these rights? Can armed interventions ever be 'humanitarian'?

Not even all Europeans share the exact same idea of human rights. For example, predominantly conservative societies hold different views on the scope of freedom of expression than the more liberal ones. Should this be taken into account by the European Court of Human Rights when interpreting the European Convention on Human Rights? To what extent (if any at all) should culturally specific values be taken into account when interpreting human rights?

Suggested Reading

Useful Websites for Basic Information on Human Rights

- http://www.un.org/en/rights/index.shtml (*UN's official Human Rights website; provides links to all relevant institutions and documents/treaties*)
- http://hub.coe.int/ (*official website of the Council of Europe; provides links to all institutions, thematic issues, and materials*)
- http://www.hrw.org/ (*official website of Human Rights Watch – one of the world's leading non-governmental organizations in the field of human rights; provides numerous online publications, country and thematic reports*)
- http://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/upr/ (*official website of the Universal Periodic Review*)

Additional Sources for a More In-depth Analysis

- C. Tomuschat, *Human Rights: Between Idealism and Realism* (2008). Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- D. Forsythe, *Human Rights in International Relations* (2012). Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.
- D. Moeckli, S. Shah, and S. Sivakumaran (eds.), *International Human Rights Law* (2010). Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- J. Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice* (2013). Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Exercises in Critical Thinking:
From an Argument to a Structured Debate on Global Issues

Teaching Argumentation

The process of building arguments is the process of drawing and demonstrating conclusions from facts or premises that have been established as general truths. Therefore, argumentation could be defined as a logical mode of persuasion and a communicational process in which logic supported with facts is used to influence others.

Students should be aware that a statement does not equal an argument – a statement is nothing more than an opinion and needs to be further explained and supported with evidence. Developing this habit requires practice. There is an easy *ARE+I* formula to follow, which helps students make sure that they are not missing any of the necessary logical steps.

Structure of an Argument: *ARE+I* MODEL

In order to make a sound argument, debaters should first state the argument. Then, they should elaborate on the logical reasoning that proves the validity and strength of the argument. In the third step, debaters should put forward relevant evidence that backs up the argument and their reasoning. Finally, they should link the argument with the context of the whole debate (i.e. the motion/team line) and analyze the overall impact of the argument.

ASSERTION - STATEMENT

A statement or an assertion is a claim about the motion and reflects a debater's position regarding the topic. It is often the name of the argument, which also reveals its main point and should thus already announce the conclusion of the argument. It should be catchy and easy to remember because usually this is the line written down by the public and the adjudicators. It should provide a straightforward answer to the question 'What is the debater stating?' or 'What is the debater going to prove?'.

REASONING - EXPLANATION ('Because...')

This is the 'because' part of the argument. It answers the question why the stated assertion should be considered true. Reasoning is a chain of logically consistent links that represent steps which brought the debater to a particular conclusion.

EVIDENCE - SUPPORT ('For example...')

Real life examples, common knowledge, expert opinions, and statistics can all be used as tools that help with persuasion, specifically by showing that the explained assertions and conclusions are grounded in real-life practice.

IMPACT – LINK - IMPORTANCE ('This is important and relevant because...')

Whereas logical reasoning answers the question why the assertion is true, this component of the argument answers the question why the debater made the assertion in the first place. That is to say, debaters have to show how an argument fits into the team line, why it is relevant for the debate, and why attention should be paid to it.

Structure of Argument Refutation

FOUR STEPS TO REFUTATION

In the process of a structured dialogue, refutation is as important as the argument itself. Good refutation leads to a reasoned discussion about the pros and cons of an issue and allows us to delve deeper into it. The 4-step refutation model brings benefits to students because it enables them to structure their reasons against an argument made by the other side, introduce their own arguments, undermine opponents' arguments and clarify their own arguments.

Step 1: They say

In a debate, or even in a single discussion, usually more than just one argument is presented. Identifying which argument we are going to address next helps the audience and the opponent understand in which direction our speech is going. This brings coherence and structure to the debate.

Step 2: But

After identifying which argument we are going to address we need to clearly state why we do not agree with the argument made by the opposing side. The counter claim should be short, clear, and concise.

Step 3: Because

In this part we provide a reference, evidence, or explain the justification for the counter claim that we wish to advance. At this point, we should bring new evidence in the debate, as this will prove the audience that we had contemplated possible arguments of the opposing side in advance. When evidence is not readily available we should at least provide our own analysis of the relevant issues presented.

Step 4: Therefore

In this step we explain the importance of our argument in relation to the argument made by the opponent. If we wish the audience to reach a conclusion in our favour, we need to show why our counter explanation is superior, more important, and/or more relevant than the opponents' argument. We should bring in as many details as possible in order to exemplify the superiority of our logic, evidence, and/or relevance.

Improve Your Argumentation Skills

Overview	Different exercises for enhancing critical thinking skills such as recognizing strong arguments, identifying assumptions, and building sound arguments.
Objectives	Equip students with critical thinking skills.
How to use it in the classroom	Teachers can use these exercises in any lesson (see list of topics to be used for increasing awareness about global human rights issues on page 133).
Age group	13 and up

BUILD AN ARGUMENT

Time	Minimum 10 minutes (depends on how many students are involved)
Materials	Paper, timer

Give each student a debate motion. Give them ten minutes to build a single argument. Then, give them two minutes to present it. Finally, discuss and analyze the argument with the entire class. Watch for the *ARE+I* components.

ADVERTISEMENT ANALYSIS

Time	Minimum 30 minutes
Materials	Article clippings (the number depends on the number of students in the group); advertisement analysis forms

Through this activity, students identify elements of argumentation in newspaper articles. This is a good way to familiarize students with basic concepts of logic in argumentation. The activity can also be used as a supplement to an introductory lesson on argumentation.

Tell students to read the articles, in groups or individually, with a focus on identifying elements of argumentation in the articles. Elements of argumentation should be broken down into the *ARE+I* components of the argument. The point of the exercise is in making students use the *ARE+I* model to analyze and 'unpack' the given texts and to internalize the basic structure of an argument.

Students can also use *ARE+I* to 'unpack' advertisements. Therewith, this exercise can couple a media literacy lesson with an *ARE+I* chart (see below), encouraging students to take an ad and break it into its component parts.

RECOMMENDED: When students are finished with their analysis, a class discussion or small group discussions about the articles can follow.

```
┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                  ADVERTISEMENT ANALYSIS                  │
│                                                          │
│  Assertion:                                              │
│                                                          │
│  Reasoning:                                              │
│                                                          │
│  Evidence:                                               │
│                                                          │
│  Impact-Importance:                                      │
└──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

FILL IN THE GAPS

Time	30 minutes
Materials	Chart of arguments with missing parts of the *ARE+I* structure

Another way to reinforce the *ARE+I* model is to help students fill in the different missing parts of arguments. Students can be given different kinds of assertions, and asked to fill in the reasons. Conversely, they can be given the assertions and reasons, and asked to fill in the evidence.

A more sophisticated approach might present students with evidence and reasoning, and have them deduce the conclusion. A mixed approach is shown in the chart below, where students are asked to fill in the missing boxes, applying both induction and deduction. This kind of approach teaches a wide range of different types of logical reasoning.

Assertion	Reasoning	Evidence
The minimum driving age should be raised to 18.	*Rising the driving age will save lives by reducing accidents.*	*16-year-old drivers have three times as many crashes as drivers aged 18 and 19.*
Television has bad influence on teenagers.	Television shows too much violence.	

117

	Introducing the death penalty will decrease the crime rate.	
		Junk food is high in fat and sugar. Too much fat and sugar puts you at risk for diabetes. According to research, people who eat a lot of junk food are exposed to a greater risk for heart diseases.
	Allowing younger people to vote would increase their involvement in politics and society.	
We should prohibit smoking in public spaces.		

Different Types of Debate and Speaking Exercises

SHORT DEBATE FORMAT – 1:1

Time	15 minutes
Materials	Pen and paper

This is one of the most useful debate formats for classroom purposes. While it does not take much of the teacher's time, it can spark a lively debate about any issue in the classroom. It can be used as a tool to repeat the previous lesson or as an introduction to the coming lesson. Short debate formats are also known as SPAR – spontaneous argumentation.

Two students debate in this format – one proposing the resolution and the other opposing it.

Ask two students to come to the front of the classroom and give them a topic. Toss a coin to determine which side each speaker will represent (if they are asked to prepare in advance this step is not necessary).

When the teacher announces the topic, students get two minutes to prepare their arguments.

Proposition speaker presents his/her constructive case – arguments that support a topic.	1 minute
Cross-examination – the opposition speaker asks questions that show weaknesses in the arguments of the proposition speaker and already set the ground for his/her arguments.	1 minute
Opposition speaker presents his/her constructive case – arguments opposing the topic.	1 minute
Cross-examination – the proposition speaker asks questions that show the weaknesses in the arguments of the opposition speaker.	1 minute
Proposition speaker refutes the arguments presented by the opposition speaker and adds new explanation and/or evidence to his/her arguments.	1 minute
Opposition speaker refutes the arguments presented by the proposition speaker and adds new explanation and/or evidence to his/her arguments.	1 minute

EXPLORING OTHER OPTIONS:

- Short debate format with questions from the audience – after the first two speeches the audience can ask both teams questions for 5 minutes.
- Short debate format with cross-examination and questions from the audience – use the format presented above. After the students are finished presenting their arguments, ask the audience to pose questions and comment on the arguments for 5 minutes.

SHORT DEBATE FORMAT – 2:2 WITH CROSS-EXAMINATION

Time	20 minutes
Materials	Pen and paper

A further option to explore with short debate formats are SPAR debates with two speakers on each side. This exercise provokes a more elaborated argumentation process because more time is available and more speeches are

given. The first refutation takes place in the first speech of the opposition, three speakers advance their arguments with further support and reasoning, and a process of argument weighing – i.e. 'clash' – happens in the last two speeches.

Four students debate in this format – two proposing the resolution and the other two opposing it.

Ask four students to come to the front of the classroom, form teams of two, and give them a topic. Toss a coin to determine on which side the speakers will speak (if they are asked to prepare in advance this step is not necessary).

When the teacher announces the topic, students get three minutes to prepare their arguments.

First proposition speaker defines the topic and presents his/her constructive case – arguments that support a topic.	2 minutes
Cross-examination – the opposition speaker asks questions that show the weaknesses in the arguments of the proposition speaker and already set the ground for his/her arguments.	2 minutes
First opposition speaker presents his/her constructive case – arguments opposing the topic.	2 minutes
Cross-examination – the proposition speaker asks questions that show the weaknesses in the arguments of the opposition speaker.	2 minutes
Second proposition speaker refutes the arguments by the opposition speaker, refutes the refutation of the first opposition speaker, and supports their arguments with new analysis and/or new evidence. He/she also presents the clashes of the debate – what were the main points of difference and why their arguments should prevail.	2 minutes
Second opposition speaker refutes the arguments by the proposition speaker, refutes the refutation of the first opposition speaker, and supports their arguments with new analysis and/or new evidence. He/she also presents the clashes of the debate – what were the main points of difference and why their arguments should prevail.	2 minutes
Questions from the audience.	5 minutes

EXPLORING OTHER OPTIONS:

Stop debate – in this format the judges (teachers or selected students – not more than three) can stop the debate at any time and ask a question, give a comment or a suggestion to the debater/debaters holding the floor. They can

also ask the debater to start over from a point where they think there was a slip-up or from a point that needed improvement. This format serves to iron out mistakes and fine-tune performances in a step-by-step way.

Individual prep – in this format we assess the knowledge of individual team members by prohibiting them from talking to each other during preparation time until the debate begins. This is also useful for improving teamwork and getting students acquainted with the way their teammates think.

THE TOSS

Time	10 minutes and up
Materials	Small paper ball (or anything else that can be thrown around – feel free to improvise)

In this exercise, students are first asked to sit/stand in a circle. The teacher presents a topic and throws the paper ball to a random student. The student now has to make an argument supporting the motion.

He/she passes the ball to another debater who now has to refute that argument. He/she then throws the ball to another student who must first defend the refuted argument and extend it. Then he/she passes the ball to a different student, who has to refute the argument again.

The exercise goes on until students run out of ideas for supporting or refuting the argument, at which point the teacher gives a new argument on the same or on a different topic for the debaters to work with.

MOTION STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Time	30 minutes
Materials	Pre-prepared arguments on a given topic

The teacher prepares a number of motions, each with specific actors, issues and regions that will be relevant to the motion. Students are asked to research the issues in the motion, locate the stakeholders and explain how they are affected by the motion, identify the status quo, and show how different stakeholders interact and how different actions influence their situation and their behavior. This exercise is useful as a way to help students figure out which problems are truly important in a motion and which are the target groups that will be most interested in how the problems are being solved.

THE 'WHY?' CHAIN

Time	20-60 minutes, as needed
Materials	A topic

The objective of the exercise is to develop argumentation skills while exploring in detail a particular subject matter. The exercise begins with taking a statement or motion relevant to the subject matter being studied.

The first student is asked to explain in a couple of sentences why the statement is true. The next student then explains why the *argument* of the student speaking before him/her was true. This continues until all students have contributed to the deepening of the argument that will ultimately be formed to support the initial statement. Chains should last for 10-15 minutes.

It is important that students are asked to try again when they use logical fallacies. If such a situation occurs, the teacher should explain what the fallacy was.

Reverse chain: After the exercise is carried out with a few motions, a more advanced form of the exercise can be used, focusing on counter-argumentation. Here, the task for all students is to explain why the statement of the last student was wrong, untrue, weak, or irrelevant.

Speaking in Character

Time	60-120 minutes as needed
Materials	A topic

The objective of the exercise is to develop argument-framing skills so as to allow for stronger emphatic characterization. The exercise begins with assigning a different motion, statement, or topic to speak for or against to each student.

Students are then instructed to imagine, firstly, in what context that subject might be discussed by decision makers. After giving answers, with any additions by the instructor or other participants, students are then asked to pick a position for or against.

Students are then asked to describe the person that would most emphatically and convincingly propose or oppose the motion and to imagine the most effective context in which they would speak on the motion. After taking answers, students are to deliver a short 2-4 minute speech as they have visualized it – in the role of the speaker they described and in the context they chose. Personal references may be used in these speeches.

Feedback should be given with regard to the correct adaptation to the 'character' and context. After all speeches are done, the idea that empathy and sincere conviction are strong tools for advocacy should be analyzed.

If time permits, follow-up speeches that conform to all the rules of argumentation can then be performed, retaining the tone and applicable emphatic elements of the previous 'character'.

Tennis Debate

Time	30 minutes or more if needed
Materials	A table, a whistle

The objective of this game is to teach argumentation and public speaking by including all students in the class at the same time. Tennis debates are usually

played in teams of three players on each side of the 'net' (because debate is really not a sport we use tables as playing fields). Someone in the room, most probably a teacher, announces a topic and designates team numbers that correspond to the numbers found on one of the tables in the room. Teams are then asked to go to the tables and wait for the topics as well as *pros* and *cons* positions.

The teacher announces the topic and tosses a coin to determine the positions in the debate (example: All teams on the left side of the tables choose heads. If heads is the result of the toss, they decide which position they wish to debate – defending or opposing the given topic).

After the positions are announced, teams have ten minutes to prepare arguments for their side. Each team is expected to prepare a list of arguments and ideas for their side.

1. First proposition speaker 'serves' by presenting an argument for their side.
2. The other side 'returns' by refuting the argument.
3. The 'argument ball' match continues until one of the players drops it.
4. Games are played from 3 up to 7 points.

Rules of the game

1. A team can only score if they 'served'.
2. The ball is passed to the other team once the first team to serve drops it.
3. You can only serve once – teams rotate clockwise after the change of serve.
4. Player 'drop' the ball when:
   a. they don't respond in 15 seconds,
   b. they don't bring anything new to the debate,
   c. they don't use the *ARE+I* to construct an argument,
   d. they don't use the 4-step refutation model for arguments coming from the other side.

Tasks for the judge

1. Keeps track of the score.

2. Interrupts the game when players drop the ball.
3. Enforces the rules and declares the winner.
4. Is fair and impartial.

Adapted from the Middle School Public Debate Program.

Contrast

Time	40-80 minutes as needed
Materials	A topic

The objective of the exercise is to expand the stylistic range of public speaking. Speakers should be given a motion each. After they prepare basic arguments for a 2-5 minute speech they should be given sets of contrasting stylistic speaking categories, such as:

+	-
aggressive	reasonable
fast	slow
wide ample body-language gestures	focused tight gestures
light-hearted	serious
high volume	low volume

Each student should deliver the speech knowing that when the instructor makes a certain sound, e.g. clapping, they should switch between the two contrasting styles. Instructors should seek to have the speakers make 2-3 switches during the speech, ideally where the contrast could actually be useful.

If possible, the instructor should assign the style sets to the speakers that have previously performed poorly in switching between the two categories. Speakers should be given feedback on how they used the styles. The instructor can interrupt to give helpful feedback during the speech if the speaker is not able to perform one of the styles and should have the student start over. Follow-up speeches can be performed if time allows.

In closing, the instructor and students should discuss how variation in style could be a useful tool in constructing the overall style of speeches.

Not Really Debate Exercises But We Love Them Anyways

The Four Corners of an Opinion

Time	30-60 minutes
Materials	Four posters, each labeled in large letters with one of the following: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree; a teacher-generated list of statements for discussion; paper and pens

The objective of this exercise is to motivate students to:

- listen to a statement on a controversial topic and decide if they strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the statement;
- work in groups to record information in support of their position;
- reconsider their stance in light of new information;
- write a concise paragraph expressing their opinion about the statement.

The process behind this exercise is simple and active strategy helps students focus their thinking about the topic of the debate as they prepare to write a well-supported paragraph stating their position.

Before the lesson

Create four posters/signs printed in large letters with the following labels, one label per sign:
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Place each poster in a different corner of the classroom.

The lesson

Provide students with a statement about an issue of interest to students or a statement about an important global issue.

For this lesson, the following statements might prove useful as the starting point for a classroom discussion:

- Students should wear uniforms to school.
- Kids should be able to have TVs in their bedrooms.
- Beauty is only skin-deep.
- Wearing a helmet when riding a bike should be mandatory.
- Because many kids need more sleep, school should start two hours later than it does now.
- Chewing gum should be banned from schools.
- Kids should be able to spend their allowance any way they want.
- Kids younger than 18 should be able to make their own decisions about whether to get a body piercing.

Some of the statements are not appropriate discussion starters for elementary level students so make sure to select an appropriate statement that will engage your students. As an alternative, you might choose to make a statement about a controversy in the news, about an issue of interest to people in your area, or use the topics suggested on page 133 of this manual.

After you have selected the motion, read it aloud and give students 5 minutes to collect their thoughts about the topic. Then ask students if they:
- strongly agree,
- agree,
- disagree, or
- strongly disagree

with the statement. Direct those who strongly agree to move to the corner of the classroom where the 'Strongly Agree' sign is posted, those who agree to move to the corner of the classroom where the 'Agree' sign is posted, etc.

Hopefully, you have four groups gathered in different corners of the classroom. Appoint one student in each corner to be the note taker, and give students 5-10 minutes to discuss with other students in the same corner the reasons why they strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree.

At the end of the discussion period, ask one student from each group to share with the class some of the ideas they discussed in their group. Perhaps one of the four groups made such a strong case that some students have changed their minds about their reaction to the statement. If that is the case, at this point in the activity give students an opportunity to change corners.

Provide 5-10 more minutes for students to continue their group discussions. At this point, every student in the group should be taking notes. At the end of the discussion time, students should use their notes to write a concise paragraph stating their position on the issue. (e.g., *I strongly agree with the statement* [*statement goes here*] *because*). Students should include in their paragraphs the four strongest points supporting their position.

EXPLORING OTHER OPTIONS:

- Have students come up with their own discussion topics.
- Over a couple class periods, use the four-corner strategy to discuss three or four different statements. Then have students write a position paper on the statement they have the strongest feelings about.
- Provide time for students to read their papers aloud. Then provide time for peer reaction. First, ask students to share *only* positive comments about their classmates' papers; then provide time for students to share *only* constructive criticism ('You might have done this differently').

Wants and Needs

Overview	Participants make cards illustrating things they think they need and want to be healthy and happy. Groups then sort these cards into 'wants' and 'needs'. The whole group discusses what it means when people's basic needs are not met and the relation of basic human needs to human rights.
Time	30-60 minutes
Materials	8 cm x 13 cm cards, old magazines, glue, scissors, art supplies

1. Ask participants working in pairs or small groups to create 10-20 cards that illustrate the things they think children need and want to be healthy and happy. They may draw these things on the cards or cut out and paste on pictures from magazines.

2. Each pair or group exchanges cards with another. The group then sorts out the new cards into categories:
- Which things are NEEDS (e.g., essentials for survival, such as food, health care, shelter)?
- Which things are WANTS but not NEEDS (e.g., desirable but not necessary for survival, such as toys, education, or voting rights)?
- Which things are neither?

3. The groups who exchanged cards join together and compare their cards. They then try to reach an agreement on categories for all the cards. When they have done so, discuss:
- Which pile of cards is bigger? Why?
- If you had to move two cards from the NEEDS pile to the WANTS pile, which two would you choose? How would your life be affected by this change (e.g., if something you feel you really need were no longer available to you)?

4. Ask whole class to combine their cards. Attach them to the wall or blackboard to complete a class list.
Discuss:
- Are all human needs included in the NEEDS list? Are there other needs that should be added to the list?
- Are all the wants included? Can the class think of others?

5. Discuss
- Is it easy to differentiate between wants and needs?
- What happens to someone when his or her wants are not fulfilled?
- What happens to someone when his or her basic needs are not met?
- What happens to a community when many people's basic needs are not met?
- Are there people who don't have their basic needs met in the world? In

Europe? In your community? In your school?

- Are there people whose basic needs are often not met?
- Should these needs be met? Why?
- Should some people have their wants satisfied when others do not have their needs met?
- What can be done to meet people's basic needs?
- Whose responsibility is it to meet people's basic needs?
- What actions can you take to help meet the basic needs of others in your community?

Going Further

Discuss the following questions:

- Are there basic human needs that are common to everyone everywhere in the world?
- Are these needs always met?
- What influences our wants?
- How are wants influenced by age? Gender? Class? Culture? Ethnicity?
- What is the relationship of human needs to human rights?

EXPLORING OTHER OPTIONS:

1. Follow up – Keep the cards and reuse them in another subject area. For example, apply the needs and wants categories to a mathematics, current events, or a foreign language lesson.

2. For younger children – Younger children may benefit from seeing concrete examples of children in order to imagine what a particular child's wants and needs might be. Have children look through magazines or pictures and choose a specific child to be an 'imaginary friend'. Children could imagine characteristics of this friend (e.g., name, age, toys, pleasures, etc.). Children could cut out this picture, mount it on paper, and introduce their new friend. This step might be done before Step 1 in the procedure section.

3. A Geography activity – If the class is learning about a different locality in geography, they could explore needs and wants of people living in a different environment, especially considering the effects of the climate, landscape, and rural or urban setting. They might reconsider the cards they made: what

pictures might be changed? What categories?

4. **A Literature activity** – Have students make their piles based on the needs and wants of characters in a short story or novel they are reading.

Adapted from Margot Brown, 'Our World, Our Rights'.

The Face of Human Rights

Overview	Participants produce a creative expression of an article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). This activity can be modified to make the resulting creations into a guessing game, a community presentation, or a celebration for December 10 – Human Rights Day. Participants could also create posters to serve as reminders for creating a favourable human rights environment.
Time	Variable
Materials	Copies of the UDHR (complete or simplified), art supplies

1. **Working individually or in small groups**, participants select an article of the UDHR that they feel is especially important. They might illustrate a right enjoyed, denied, defended, or all three.

2. **Create:**
   - a skit or mime,
   - a graphic illustration or mural,
   - a song, dance, proverb, or game (these might include adaptations of traditional culture),
   - a poem or story,
   - a commercial advertisement,
   - a flag or a banner.

Note: The project should not reveal the number of the article it illustrates.

3. When the projects are complete, ask each team or individual to **show their creation**. The rest of the participants try to guess which article of the UDHR is illustrated. When it is correctly identified, the person or team that answers correctly reads the full article aloud. These presentations might be structured as

a team competition with points to the teams that identify the correct article.

EXPLORING OTHER OPTIONS:

1. Going further

Display – Post graphic illustrations in a library, children's museum, or community building or use them to create a calendar or a mural.
Present – The skits, mimes, songs, dances, or writings can be presented as a performance for classmates, parents, or other groups in the community.
Celebrate – One can celebrate Human Rights Day by planning a December 10 Festival around these materials. Invite your local newspaper, TV stations, and public officials.

2. Adaptation

Posters for Public Places – Create illustrations or posters which remind others that human rights should be a part of everyone's lives. For example, create posters that remind everyone that the workplace or school is a 'human rights community'. Where special problems exist, these posters could serve as a basis for action. Strategize how to use these posters to ensure that rights are honored and that changes take place in your community.

Adapted from the Human Rights Educators' Network, Amnesty International USA.

Suggested Debate Topics

Below, there is a list of possible debate topics that can be used in the context of Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education. Some topics are more general in nature and can thus be debated without preparation prior to the debate. Many, however, are more specific and will require students to do research before they can start making arguments either in favour or against the topic.

A formal debate is a communicational event that mimics parliamentary discussions. Therefore, the topics below are presented in the form of a proposition put before 'the House', i.e. parliament or any other type of representative assembly. The abbreviations stand for:

- TH = This House
- THBT = This House Believes That
- THW = This House Would.

Slovenia

THBT peer violence should be punished more severely.
THBT high schools should introduce a mandatory fifty-hours-per-year voluntary service for all students.
THBT Christian-only national Holidays violate religious freedom.
THBT representation of minorities at the local level is more important than at the national level.
THBT citizens' participation in elections should be mandatory.
THBT the state should guarantee a Universal Basic Income.
THBT civil disobedience in democracy is justified.
THBT revolution is the fundament of social development.
THBT the state should introduce affirmative action for executive positions.
TH supports affirmative action measures.
THBT gay couples should be allowed to adopt children.
THBT national identity is more important than the values of multiculturalism.
THBT prison time for hate speech is justified.
THBT co-financing of religious schools by the state is justified.

THBT the environmental refugee quota should correspond to the CO_2 emissions of a country.
THBT African human rights challenges require African solutions.
THBT capitalism lets the sick suffer.
THBT the right to asylum should not be absolute.
THW allow states to ban products made with child labor.
THBT the West has a moral duty to spread democracy all over the world.
THW abolish the debt of developing countries.
THW give aid locally rather than nationally.
THW scrap drugs patents.
THB in multiculturalism.
TH supports the Responsibility to Protect.
THBT water should be treated as an economic good.
TH supports the use of 'enhanced interrogation techniques' in the fight against terrorism.

Macedonia

THW lower the voting age to 16.
THBT the youth should have their own political party.
THW censor racist views in the media.
THW allow prisoners to vote.
THW make voting compulsory.
THW impose democracy.
THBT citizens have no moral obligation to obey laws that they personally perceive as unjust.
THW require prospective parents to obtain parenting license prior to having children.
TH prefers a strong dictatorship to a weak democracy.
THBT the press cannot be trusted to regulate itself.
THBT the European Union should open its borders to all immigrants.
THW institute gender and racial quotas in all government cabinets.
THW explicitly prohibit subjecting gay marriage legislation to a referendum vote.
THW ban extremist political parties.

THBT all University students should attend basic lectures on human rights.

THW have debate lessons compulsory in schools.

THW invest in open education.

THBT human rights have lost their power.

THBT schools should prefer applicants with good genes when giving scholarships.

TH does not believe in 'open mindedness'.

THW ban extremist political parties.

THW ban religious symbols in public buildings.

THBT freedom of expression is more important than religious sensitivities.

Croatia

THW ban abortion in all stages of pregnancy.

THW legalize euthanasia.

THW legalize prostitution.

THW reinstate capital punishment.

THW legalize corporal punishment.

THBT soft drugs should be legalized.

THBT that unrestricted access to the Internet should be a human right.

THBT that democracy has more flaws then benefits.

THBT we should not allow children to participate in martial arts and sports.

THBT health education should become part of institutional education.

THBT civic education should become a part of institutional education.

THBT fashion should not be a luxury and quality not a privilege.

THBT people only accept love they think they deserve.

THBT animals should have more rights.

THBT representative democracy is better than direct democracy.

THBT everything that is allowed for adults should be allowed for children.

THBT all teachers should be replaced with machines (robots, computers...).

THBT age of consent should be higher.

THBT it is justified to kill a dictator.

THBT the whole nation is guilty for war, not just individuals

THBT science is more important than arts.

THBT education should be free.

THBT underage children should not be allowed to be vegetarians.

THW legalize incest.

THBT art censorship is justified.

THBT the right to vote should have a 'use it or lose it' principle.

THBT advertisements targeting children should be illegal.

THBT men are better than women.

THBT healthcare should be free.

THBT hacking is a legitimate form of protest.

THBT every employee should have the right to the company's profit share.

THBT all art should be free.

APPENDICES

Appendix I: Additional Methodological Explanations

The Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Test

MEASURING CRITICAL THINKING

Watson and Glaser as well as different debate related manuals and other humanistic literature develop, identify, and conceptualize critical thinking as:

- attitudes of inquiry that involve an ability to recognize the existence of problems and an acceptance of the general need for evidence in support of what is asserted to be true;
- knowledge of the nature of valid inferences, abstractions, and generalizations in which the weight or accuracy of different kinds of evidence are logically determined;
- skills in employing and applying the above attitudes and knowledge (Watson & Glaser, 1994).

The *Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal®* (*W-GCTA*) is designed according to this understanding of critical thinking and measures abilities and skills related to analytical reasoning. The *W-GCTA* should thus be understood as a psychometric test of critical thinking and reasoning. It measures skills related to problem-solving and decision-making in a variety of different question types (Watson-Glaser profile report, 2009).

The test is measuring how examinees are able to a) recognize assumptions and separate fact from opinion, b) how they evaluate arguments, and c) how they draw conclusions and decide their course of action.

To accommodate for the specifics of this research we adopted the unsupervised/on-line short/practice version of the test - *Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal – UK Edition – Practice test.*[33] This version of the test consists of 17 question divided in 5 parts:
- Drawing inference – discriminating among degrees of truth or falsity of inferences drawn from given data;

---

[33] An authorized version of the test is avalible at www.pearsonvue.com/nphstr/wg_practice.pdf.

- Recognizing assumptions – recognizing unstated assumptions or presuppositions in given statements or assertions;
- Deductive reasoning – determining whether certain conclusions necessarily follow from information in given statements or premises;
- Logical interpretation – weighing evidence and deciding if generalizations or conclusions based on the given data are warranted;
- Argument evaluation – distinguishing between arguments that are strong and relevant and those that are weak or irrelevant to a particular issue.

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

The raw score on the *Watson-Glaser practice test* is calculated by adding the total number of correct responses. The maximum raw score is 17 (comprised of 4 recognize assumptions items, 7 evaluate arguments items, and 6 draw conclusions items) but very little can be inferred from these raw scores alone. To make the test results meaningful (this goes especially for individual examinee result), it is important to relate the scores to specifically defined normative groups. However, raw scores too can be used to rank examinees in order of their performance.

Because there are no available data or research reports with demographically similar and statistically relevant samples (which could be used as a normative group for comparison with our obtained results), and especially because this research is generally set as a comparison between two non-related samples – a group of debaters and a group of non-debaters (controlling for other relevant variables such as age, gender, educational and social background, extracurricular activities), we decided to focus on measuring only statistically significant and pertinent differences between those two samples.

To achieve a higher validity and reliability of the test, one should also do a second comparative analysis. This additional analysis needs to compare samples of debaters and the general population using the available percentile statistic published in the 2009 Watson-Glaser profile report.[34] According to this

---

[34] In the 2009 Watson-Glaser profile report, there is a sample available of the general UK population which is the broader and most similar and statistically relevant normative group for our research.

'examinees with scores equal to or less than the 30th percentile are described as "below average" in applying the critical thinking necessary for effective analysis and decision making; examinees with scores between the 31st and 70th percentiles are described as being "moderately skilled and consistent;" examinees with scores equal to or greater than the 71st percentile are described as being "highly skilled and consistent'".

MEASURING INSTRUMENT CHARACTERISTICS – VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

The Watson-Glaser test has been extensively validated to provide the most accurate picture of critical thinkers available. W-G scores correlate with: (1) Cognitive ability (e.g., r=.60 with WAIS-IV fluid reasoning composite; n=49); (2) Occupational and educational attainment (e.g., r =.28 with job level; n=432; r=.33 with education level; n=581); (3) Job performance (e.g., r=.28 with supervisory ratings of core critical thinking behaviors; n=68); (4) Attitudes or personality preferences related to critical thinking performance (e.g., for the correlation between Watson-Glaser Evaluate Arguments and Myers-Briggs Feeling, r=-.27, n=60) (Watson-Glaser Technical and Manual User's Guide, 2009).

All the short test versions of Watson-Glaser have also demonstrated an acceptably high level of test-retest *reliability* (Deary, Whalley, Lemmon, Crawford, and Starr, 2000). In 1994, a study investigating the test-retest reliability of the Watson-Glaser Short Form was conducted using a sample of 42 adults who completed the Short Form two weeks apart. The test-retest correlation was .81(p<.001). The difference in means scores between the first testing and the second testing was statistically small (d=0.16) (Watson-Glaser Technical and Manual User's Guide, 2009).

A *valid* measurement tool or procedure does a good job of measuring the concept that it purports to measure. According to the Watson-Glaser profile report (2009), collectively, the evidence of content, construct, and criterion-related *validity* for the Watson-Glaser II is solid and the relationships are of a magnitude similar to that found with prior versions of the instrument. The Watson-Glaser II measures the cognitive abilities that underlie critical thinking skills. There is some, albeit limited, evidence that its components are also related to attitudes or personality preferences that can foster critical thinking performance. Finally, the Watson-Glaser II is associated with occupational and

educational attainment and job performance, especially performance related to thinking and problem-solving competencies.[35]

Active Participation in Public Life

Active participation in public life, including political and socio-economic processes, has become a hallmark for understanding and measuring democratic citizenship. As follows from the final report of the Regioplan final publication 'Indicators for Measuring Active Citizenship and Citizenship Education' (de Weerd *et al* 2005: 12), a common element stands out in differing definitions of democratic citizenship, namely, **participation**. The European Union and Council of Europe single out participation in various spheres of public life as an end goal of a successful citizenship education. Channels to take into consideration when speaking about active participation include: economic and social life, civic life, democratic civil society, and the community. The underlying value of all definitions is consolidated around the idea that 'participation should be "democratic", meaning tolerant and non-violent and acknowledging human rights and the rule of law' (de Weerd *et al* 2005: 12).

If we look closely at the 'Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life', a direct link is established between young people's participation and prosperous and democratic societies:

> *'/t/he active participation of young people in decisions and actions at local and regional level is essential if we are to build more democratic, inclusive and prosperous societies. Participation in the democratic life of any community is about more than voting or standing for election, although these are important elements. Participation and active citizenship is about having the right, the means, the space and the opportunity and where necessary the support to participate in and influence decisions and engage in actions and activities so as to contribute to building a better society.'*

---

[35] Data and research reports to support this analysis are published and available in the Watson-Glaser Technical and Manual User's Guide (2009), 16-39.

The second part of the questionnaire set out to analyze if inclusion in debate activities, as an extra curricula activity, holds up to its promise of positively contributing to the process of socialization in active citizenship, i.e., does it, as a positive learning method, increase active participation?

In this part of the questionnaire we isolated three variables that define political participation and are promoted as defining features of debate communities around the world:

- knowledge of current affairs;
- skills of political participation (from passive information gathering to active participation);
- engagement in public life.

Knowledge of current affairs – the success of participating in a debate activity relays heavily on the extent to which individuals acquire knowledge of current socio-political events at the national as well as the international level. Being knowledgeable about what is going on is a prerequisite for firmly supporting your opinions and defending the different arguments on a given topic before your audience, as well as for developing an informed opinion about an issue. Knowledge in a formal debate setting is adjudicated under the category of 'content' in which the judges mark the quality of factual and topical knowledge of the speaker in a given debate. The diverse area of debated topics in different debate competitions and debate education events indicates that being involved in debate stimulates interest in topics that promote awareness of current social, economic, and political topics.

To test the correlation between involvement in debate and interest in public affairs, we asked the respondents to indicate whether they believe they are informed enough about the public affairs, and to indicate the frequency of their active following of political topics in diverse media. The questions were designed with the aim of understanding the respondents self-perceived level of awareness of public affairs and in particular of their interest in actively seeking out information on political events. With this variable we tested to what extent debate contributes to an interest in being informed about common affairs. We did this by testing the correlation between the two questions and the variable of involvement in debate.

Skills – debate seeks to actively contribute to the development of skills that present a cornerstone of education for democratic citizenship (EACEA 2012: 32):

- civic related skills (participating through volunteering, influencing public policy, voting, petitioning);
- social skills (living and working with others, resolving conflict);
- communication skills (listening, understanding, and engaging in discussion);
- intercultural skills (establishing intercultural dialogue and appreciating cultural differences).

This set of questions focused on presenting the respondents' self-assessment of their communication skills, and to a certain extent civic related skills.[36] These two sets of skills are inherent in the mission statements of the majority of debate programs.

The variable consists of a series of nine affirmative statements operationalizing the two skills sets and asks the respondents to indicate to what extent these statements are characteristic of them (from 'does not apply at all to me' to 'it totally applies to me').

Engagement in public life – ways of engagement in public life have shifted considerably in the dawn of the so-called 'post-materialist' era. If elections were traditionally considered to be a prime expression of influencing decision-making processes, this no longer holds true either in theory or in practice. The general trend in Europe also points to a radical decrease in trust/confidence in political institutions, as well as to a low voter turnout in general.[37]

---

[36] To encompass the whole set of skills was beyond the scope of this research. Although three interesting avenues for research of debate influence would have been: i) a comparative study focusing on the effects of debate communities structure on social skills; ii) correlation between the frequency of international activities in a given debate program and intercultural skills; iii) and an analysis of the ways in which debate triggers civic related skills. With this sample and research design we could not expand the scope of the survey to this extent, but the data collected will provide us with an initial insight into the relevance of this research in the future.

[37] See, for example, European Commission, 'Public Opinion in the European Union', (2012) *Standard Eurobarometer 77*, at 13-14; European Commission, 'European Youth – Participation in Democratic Life', (2013) *Flash Eurobarometer 375*.

On the other hand, however, new ways of active engagement are emerging and new theories are being developed, explaining either that these new trends point to a 'loss of the political' or that a radical shift in the way individuals exercise their political freedom and obligations has begun. One of the more disputed ways of political participation is presented by the emergence of internet as an agent of the new political era, reviving discussions on direct democracy as well as total voting body alienation.

Engagement in public life can range from discussing politics with your parents and peers to actively participating in demonstrations or holding a position in a political party. In this part we refrained from asking questions about membership in groups (political parties, student council, etc.).[38] We divided types of engagement in three subgroups:

- online engagement (petition, FB group membership)
- local engagement (organization of public discussions, discussion with parents and/or local community about politics)
- classic engagement (petitions, demonstrations)[39]

If knowledge and skills present two out of three cornerstones of democratic citizenship,[40] and if debate enhances both of them, then it should follow that debaters in general are more engaged in public life.

The correlation between active involvement in debate and participation in public life is therefore the primary focus of the second part of the questionnaire. The results of the quantitative data analysis of the questionnaire are going to be discussed against the qualitative analysis of the teacher interviews as to offer a deeper understandings of the different ways in which debate can stand out as an important contributing factor to socialization in democratic citizenship.

---

[38] Group membership is covered in the third question of the questionnaire. Due to a relatively small percentage of respondents offering an answer to the question 'engagement in other activities',we left it out from the analysis.

[39] For the purpose of this analysis, we deliberately left out 'voting', since our target group of respondents falls below the voting age limit.

[40] The third cornerstone, namely, values, is discussed in the third part, with a special focus on respecting and understanding the other.

Tolerance Towards People with Opposite Opinions

We wanted to check whether there is a difference between debaters and non-debaters when it comes to tolerance towards people with opinions opposite to one's own. The peculiarity of the debate program is that it demands from debaters to argue not only in favour of their own opinion but also against it. This might cause the effect that debaters become more tolerant than non-debaters towards people with opinions opposite to theirs since they should have a higher level of understanding how people come to have opposite opinions. It might, however, also have the exactly opposite effect, causing them be less tolerant since it leads to their own opinions becoming stronger and more elaborated, encouraging them to engage more frequently into arguments to challenge their opinions and the opinions of others. We were interested to see if the same effect would appear with opinions regarding general topics and opinions of oneself.

To test this, we had to create an instrument measuring the desired effect of debate. We first created two groups of ten statements, one concerning general issues (ex. animal rights), and the other concerning one's personal opinion of oneself (ex. *'I have good leadership skills'*). We asked students to first pick one statement from the general group on which they have the strongest and most elaborate opinion. The statements were neutral, and it did not matter to us whether their opinion went in favour or against the statement. After they picked the statement, we asked them to grade how strong and how elaborate their opinion was. They then had to imagine a person that has an opinion opposite of theirs that is as strong and elaborate as theirs. Besides measuring strength and elaborateness of their opinion, another function of this process was to get the respondents into a clearer mindset of what their opinion was and what a person with an opposite opinion would think. What followed was a semantic differential set of questions, after which followed a social distance set of questions. Finally, the same process was repeated with the group of personal level statements.

The semantic differential has been scientifically proven as a valid method for measuring attitudes (ex. attitude formation (e.g., Barclay arid Thumin, 1963), attitudes toward organizations (e.g., Rodefeld, 1967), attitudes toward jobs and occupations (e.g., Triandis, 1959; Beardslee and O'Dowd, 1961; Gusfield and Schwartz, 1963), and attitudes toward minorities (e.g., Prothro and Keehn, 1957;

Williams, 1964; 1966). We created this semantic differential set of questions following the typical set of rules for creating scales such as this. We chose ten pairs of opposite adjectives, one of which was clearly positive and the other clearly negative (eg., smart and stupid, strong-minded and weak-minded). None of the adjectives had a clear connection to the statements. The adjectives were written at opposing sides with a seven-point scale between them and the values closer to each adjective meant a higher degree of possessing that trait. The adjectives were also mixed in such a way that sometimes the positive adjectives were on the left and sometimes on the right side, in order to to discourage people from merely circling the adjectives without carefully considering which value to choose. After the measurements were taken, we ended up with 10 values per participant, which were then re-coded so that the higher value would always represent the more positive adjective. We summed up all ten values, producing the final score for a participant, which is the standard way of producing a social differential result. The semantic differential is a great method to measure one's affective part of an attitude. The methodological background idea of this is that people will evaluate more negatively people, places, attitudes, events, etc. towards which they have negative affections and more positively those towards which they have positive affections. Since intolerance most frequently becomes a practical problem when people have negative feelings towards people (whether it is because of having opposite opinions or belonging to a different race), our opinion is that this is a quality methodology to measure tolerance.

The main issue with this method is that it only provides us with an idea of the affective direction of the attitude and not with a clear idea of what the person's attitude really is, since it does not measure cognitive and behavioral parts of the attitude. As a result, it is possible to have two people with the same score value who have completely different cognitive attitudes and would behave completely differently towards a person with an opinion opposite to theirs. The other downside to this method is that people tend to present themselves as more tolerant than they are. We tried to address this issue by making the questionnaire anonymous. Furthermore, the values do not clearly represent a real-life value, rather, the respondents are free to interpret which number represents what. This last downside is also a positive side of this method, as it allows people to project their feelings towards an issue when they choose a value.

The second main part of the 'tolerance towards people with opposite opinions' measure was a social distance scale. Here, we again asked the respondents to imagine a person with an equally strong and an equally elaborated opinion opposite to theirs, and asked how much it would bother them if that person was in variety of social situations with them. We created a set of six different social situations scaling from the farthest (a person living in the same town as you) to the closest (the person you had an intimate relationship with or was your closest friend). At each social distance level, we asked the respondents to evaluate how much it would bother them on a seven-point scale if they were in a social situation with this imaginary person. This is a typical methodology used to measure tolerance towards groups of people (national, racial, sexual minorities). The idea behind the methodology is that people who have less tolerance towards certain kind of people would have different levels of social distance in which they would be bothered by the person's presence. For example, a white supremacist would have issues with a person of a different race living in the same town, while a bigot would only have a problem if that person were in their group of friends. In our case, we believed that persons with low levels of tolerance towards people with opposite opinions would react in the same way as with the race example on our social distance scale.

The main benefit of this measurement is that even though people are not likely to clearly state they are intolerant, not feeling comfortable in a social situation with a certain person reflects a tolerance issue that people are sometimes not even aware of or would like to hide it. Equally, the downside of this methodology is that people are likely to lie when it comes to stating they would feel uncomfortable with a certain person in a certain type of situation, the effect we again attempted to minimize by making the questionnaires anonymous.

We are well aware that our designed methodology for measuring tolerance towards people with opposite opinions is not standardized scientifically, but during its creation, we followed all the requirements for creating similar tests, while additionally trying to adjust them to our needs. Therefore, the results we received with the use of this methodology are not necessarily scientifically undisputable, but they definitely give us an idea of whether further scientific research of this issue would be meaningful.

Appendix II: 'Let's Discuss Debate' Questionnaire

Due to its considerable length, the complete 'Let's Discuss Debate' questionnaire is only available in online form. Please visit the web address below for the complete version:

http://bit.ly/letsdiscussdebate

You can also access the questionnaire by scanning this QR code:

- ▪ Criteria for the interviewees:
  - o Educators who are actively involved in teaching debate to high-school students
  - o We prefer more experienced teachers
- ▪ We will record all interviews (audio) and put them on the Internet.
- ▪ We prefer that all interviews be done in English (but will also accept interviews done in national languages).
- ▪ **Every project partner should prepare at least 5 interviews. Deadline (for uploading the audio on the Internet) is 30 April.**
- ▪ The interview should be 40 to 60 minutes long.

8. **Debate Background** – Describe your debate background and your experiences in debate.

Follow up questions:
How long have you been involved in debate? In what way are you involved in debate (are you a debate coach, a classroom teacher using debate as a teaching tool, associate or representative of the NGO…)? Approximately how many tournaments have you participated in? How long have you been training debate for? What age group of students do you teach and work with? Why have you decided to start teaching debate in the beginning? How were you as an educator introduced to debate?

9. **Methodology** – Describe your methodology, methods and types of exercises you are using when teaching debate. Give us some examples of 'good practice'.

Follow up questions:
What methods do you use to teach debate? In which contexts do you teach debate? What types of exercises do you use to teach debating? What type of debate education do you think advances debate skills best? (Debate camps, lectures, workshops, competitions, etc.)

10. **Obstacles** – When teaching and introducing debate, have you encountered any institutional, organizational or pedagogical difficulties? Describe them.

Follow up questions:
What organizational obstacles have you encountered in teaching debate? What are the organizational problems of introducing debate techniques in the educational process? What are the institutional problems of introducing debate techniques in the educational process? What are the difficulties of working with debaters? Are there any significant negative responses to debate activity (teachers, teacher community, other NGOs, other national organizations)? Does debate as such (as a technique) have any negative effects? Is there anything in the debate technique that prevents successful and efficient implementation?

11. **Students** – What kind of students do you work with (is there any specific type or characteristic of these students)? What is the general reaction of students when they are introduced to debate?

Follow up questions:
What kind of students do you work with? What types of students are involved in debating? (In terms of values held, social background, political orientation, or other relevant characteristics). Are students more motivated for critical analysis, research, and learning when they do it in the context of competitive debating? What are the biggest obstacles that students face when they start debating?

12. **Results** – What are the effect of teaching debate and using debate techniques (seen on students, student community...)?

Follow up questions:
What are the biggest changes that take place with debaters and in the student community as a result of their involvement in debating? Give examples of such changes. What skills, abilities, or characteristics do debaters gain? Is there change in how they interact socially? Why do you think using debate is good? Have you done any studies to see what results debate brings?

13. **Human Rights Education and Active Citizenship** – How do you feel debating influences the civic activity and political involvement/participation of debaters?

How about civic awareness and understanding of civic and political issues? How informed, understanding, and tolerant are they in relation to contentious socio-political issues? Do you think debate significantly contributes to human rights education? How? Illustrate.

14. Introducing Debate Through NGO Project Work and/or Through National Curricula

Follow up questions:

What are the national systemic priorities in introducing the debate method? How to upgrade the existing models of debate – should debate be introduced only through NGO project work or also within the national curricula? What do you think about different possibilities of introducing the debate in the national curricula (through Ministry of Education, with special emphasis on NGOs and their role in implementing debate)? Should NGOs be included in forming national curricula? How can debate clubs on middle school level, high school, and university level be cooperative and productive partners in forming national curricula?