

Debate

A pedagogy for language learning



To instruct someone... is not a matter of getting him to commit results to mind. Rather, it is to teach him to participate in the process that makes possible the establishment of knowledge.

We teach a subject not to produce little living libraries on that subject, but rather to get a student to think mathematically for himself, to consider matters as an historian does, to take part in the process of knowledge-getting.

Knowing is a process not a product.

(Bruner, 1966: 72)

There are three preconditions that must be satisfied in any **effective knowledge-building**:

- 1) Shared experiences
- 2) Shared knowledge
- 3) Common evaluation of the situation

Context: Research and Policy

21st Century Skills: The Technical Organization of Work (US National Research Council, 1999)

21st century knowledge economy worksites characterized by -

- A new **technical organization** of work, characterized by...
 - Significantly greater cognitive complexity
 - Expanded information processing and knowledge requirements
 - Cross-functional, transdisciplinary, interactive tasks environments and project work
 - High levels of tacit and uncodified knowledge
- Generating a demand for new kinds of **cognitive and communication skills**
 - Analytical problem solving
 - Knowledge application
 - Generation of new knowledge
 - Understanding complex multi-level functional relationships and systems
 - Reflexive knowledge (self understanding)

21st Century Skills: The Social Organization of Work

(US National Research Council, 1999)

- A new **social organization of work** characterized by
 - Greater autonomy
 - Flatter hierarchies
 - More team work
 - More intensive interaction
 - Shared decision making
 - More risk taking
 - More extensive oral and written communication
- Generating demand for new kinds of **social understanding and skills**
 - A sense of agency
 - Interpersonal problem solving
 - Independence
 - Collaboration
 - Trust
 - Adaptability

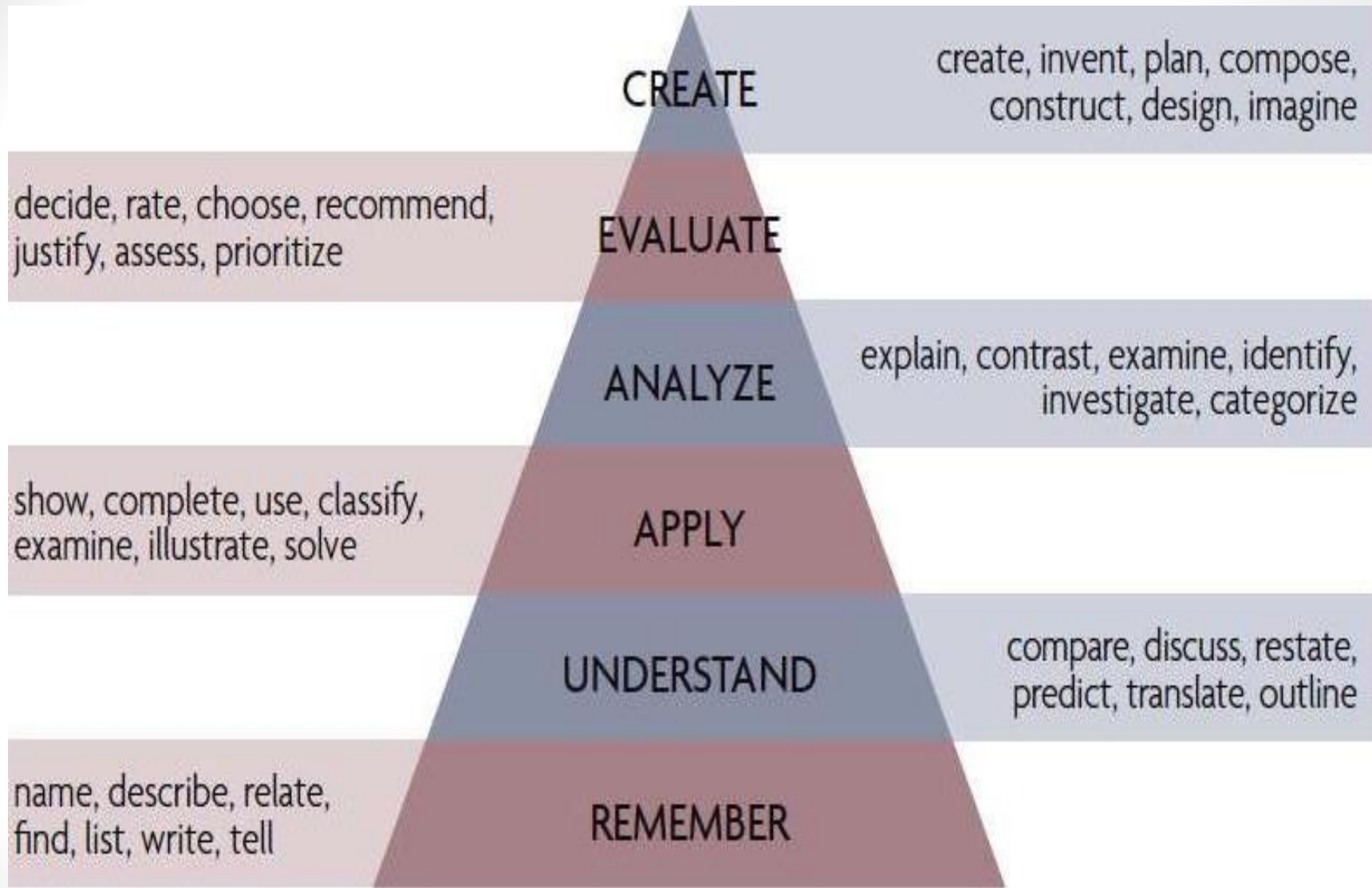
- The key pedagogical challenge facing policy makers, researchers and teachers in Singapore is to improve the *intellectual quality of knowledge work*, broadly defined, that teachers and students engage in classrooms ...

... in *TLLM's* terms, to shift the focus from the “quantity” of learning to the “quality” of learning

- How might we achieve this objective?

The Dynamics of Debate as a Pedagogical Tool for Language Learning

- **Teacher Initiates Topic**
- **Student Organises Thoughts** (Individual Response + Self-Evaluation)
- **Student Articulates Viewpoints** (Group Response + Peer Evaluation)
- **Teacher Gives Feedback** (Teacher Response + Evaluation by Students)
- **Student-centered Debate**
(Group Student Response + Evaluation by Teacher and Peers)
- **Grading of Students** (Final Evaluation by Teachers and Students)



The 6 Levels of Bloom's Taxonomy

- **Remember:**
can students recall information they have read or heard?
- **Understand:**
can students explain the ideas or concepts they have read or heard about?
- **Apply:**
can students use the information in another context or a different situation or for a different task?
- **Evaluate:**
can students assess the value of the input information?
- **Analyse:**
can students break the information down into its component parts?
- **Create:**
can students use the input to create something new?

See: <http://www.celt.iastate.edu/teaching-resources/effective-practice/revised-blooms-taxonomy/>

*The different levels of Bloom's Taxonomy can and should be used in a more **integrated** way. For this reason, it can be helpful to consider them as a circle, with no start or finish, and where the skills can be integrated in any order.*

The Definition Phase

Debate as a Pedagogy for Language Learning at St. Andrew's
Secondary School

Learning Outcomes of Definition Phase

Students will be able to: **Outline the case and tailor it to the specific case parameters**

- *Skills:* Planning of purpose, goals, audience and genre

Element: Question All reasoning is an attempt to figure something out, to settle some QUESTION, to solve some problem.

- State the question at issue clearly and precisely.
- Express the question in several ways to clarify its meaning.
- Break the question into sub-questions.
- Distinguish questions that have definitive answers from those that are a matter of opinion or that require multiple viewpoints.

Question at issue
problem, issue

State the Question

The question lays out the problem or issue and guides our thinking. When the question is vague, our thinking will lack clarity and distinctness.

The question should be clear and precise enough to productively guide our thinking.

Questions which target the question

- What is the question I am trying to answer?
- What important questions are embedded in the issue?
- Is there a better way to put the question?
- Is this question clear? Is it complex?
- I am not sure exactly what question you are asking. Could you explain it?
- The question in my mind is this: How do you see the question?
- What kind of question is this? Historical? Scientific? Ethical? Political? Economic? Or...?
- What would we have to do to settle this question?

A Sample Topic

This house believes that single-gender schools should be abolished.

Adopted from: National Julia Gabriel Debating Championships 2014

Dissecting the Topic with Critical Thinking



This house believes that
single-gender schools
should be abolished.

Questions to be worked on as a group:

- **What** is the question we are trying to answer (in simple words)?
- **What** important issues are embedded in the question?
- **Is there** a better way to put the question?
- **How** do you see the question?
- **What** kind of question is this? Historical? Scientific? Ethical? Political? Social? Economic? Or...?
- **What** would we have to do to settle this question?

Goal Setting

1. Set **specific** but **achievable** goals for learning. For example:
 - a. I want to learn how to write a topic sentence/thesis statement.
 - b. I want to learn how to write a hook using a quote.
 - c. I want to learn how to construct an argument using PEEL writing strategy
2. Determine the **actions needed** to achieve your goals. For example:
 - a. I need to listen in class to learn the writing strategy PEEL.
 - b. I need to learn the various ways to write a hook.
 - c. I need to listen to the debate speeches to identify the hook used by the debaters.

Think about the effective efforts such as the actions you need to take to achieve your goals in learning how to write. It can be as simple as paying attention in class and taking notes during lessons.

State your goals and the action you intend to take to achieve these goals.

I would want to state my ideas in the paragraphs and list down the reasons of the different points from my research that I have done. I need to have a good backing and support from my research website to back up the points and to let the reader (which is you) to decide for yourself ^{whether} to abolish the single-gender schools or to ~~keep~~ the ~~culture of the~~ ^{retain} single-gender schools in our ⁿ ~~com~~temporary society.

Q1. Word Association

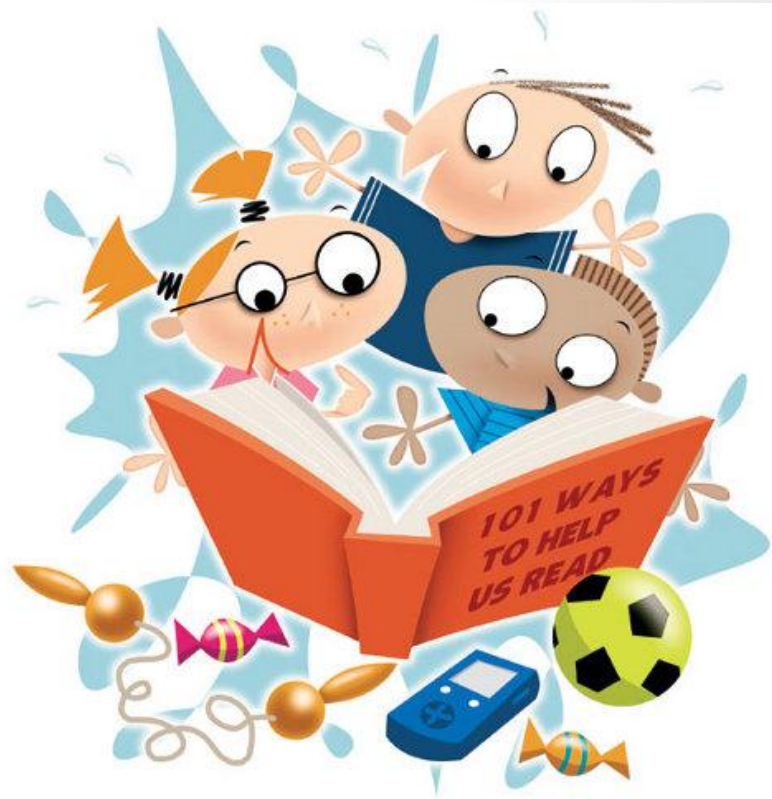
Think of 5 or more words associated with the term "single-gender schools" and write them below.
(Note that such words can be used as the basis for your points in your essay.)

e.g. segregation, rigid/fixed

→ exclusive → solo → independent → diversity
→ flexible → rigid → divided → segregation

Activity 1

The Definition Phase



The Research Phase

Debate as a Pedagogy for Language Learning at
St. Andrew's Secondary School

Learning Outcomes of Research Phase

(Slide 1 of 2)

Students will be able to:

Identify relevant research material for a debate theme and to organise such material in a readable format

- *Skills:* Comprehension of phrases/sentences/components in research material, brainstorming techniques

Students will be able to:

Build vocabulary specific to the debate theme

- *Skills:* Comprehension of key words and their impact in research material

Learning Outcomes of Research Phase

(Slide 2 of 2)

Students will be able to:
Evaluate credibility of
research

- *Skills:* Using prior knowledge, context(s) and understanding of language

Element: Information All reasoning is based on DATA, INFORMATION and EVIDENCE.

- Restrict your claims to those supported by the data you have.
- Search for information that opposes your position as well as information that supports it.
- Make sure that all information used is clear, accurate and relevant.
- Make sure you have gathered sufficient information.

Gather... Information

Information includes the facts, data, evidence, or experiences we use to figure things out. It does not necessarily imply accuracy or correctness.

The information you use should be accurate and relevant to the question or issue you are addressing.

Questions which target information

- What information do I need to answer this question?
- What data are relevant to this problem?
- Do we need to gather more information?
- Is this information relevant to our purpose or goal?
- On what information are you basing that comment?
- What experience convinced you of this? Could your experience be distorted?
- How do we know this information (data, testimony) is accurate?
- Have we left out any important information that we need to consider?



Information
data, facts,
observations,
experiences

A Research Sample

MARCH 7, 2012

Single-Sex Classrooms →



Why study single-sex classrooms?

Is this backwards? Should we be encouraging coeducational systems from an early age, as

we have been, or segregating our students into single-sex environments? Do students learn differently when they are in a single-sex environment? Do schools shortchange boys? Could single-gender classes or schools make a difference?

As educators, one of our primary goals is to promote success for all of our students. To refine our teaching philosophies and practices, we should study all aspects of education and consider any factors that may affect it.

Evaluating Research Samples with Critical Thinking

MARCH 7, 2012

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Questions to be worked on as a group:

- **What** information (data, facts, observations, experiences) do we need to support my group's stand (on single-gender schools)?
- **Is this** information relevant to our purpose or goal?
- **Do we need** to gather more information (data, facts, observations, experiences)? **Why?**
- **What** experience convinced myself of the information in the source? **Could** my experience be distorted?
- **How** do we know this information is accurate?
- **Have** we left out any important information that we need to consider?

Element: Interpretation and Inference All reasoning contains **INFERENCES** or **INTERPRETATIONS** by which we draw **CONCLUSIONS** and give meaning to data.

- Infer only what the evidence implies.
- Check inferences for their consistency with each other.
- Identify assumptions underlying your inferences.

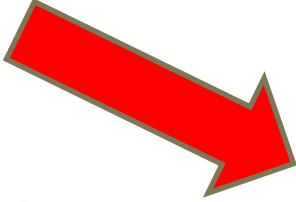
Watch Your... Inferences

Inferences are interpretations or conclusions you come to. Inferring is what the mind does in figuring something out.

Inferences should logically follow from the evidence. Infer no more or less than what is implied in the situation.

Questions to check your inferences

- What conclusions am I coming to?
- Is my inference logical?
- Are there other conclusions I should consider?
- Does this interpretation make sense?
- Does our solution necessarily follow from our data?
- How did you reach that conclusion?
- What are you basing your reasoning on?
- Is there an alternative plausible conclusion?
- Given all the facts what is the best possible conclusion?
- How shall we interpret these data?



**Interpretation
and Inference
conclusions,
solutions**

A Research Sample (continued...)

Are there any harmful effects of single-sex classrooms?

- According to some research, the benefits of single-sex classrooms apply mainly to girls, who feel free from harrassment and the troublesome behaviour of boys. Boys, on the other hand, seem to benefit little from a single-sex learning environment
- Some researchers suggest that single-sex school environments could also be detrimental to boys. (Note that here the author does not state how specifically the environment can be 'detrimental,' other than suggesting that boys' learning rates do not significantly improve)
- One study found girls in single-sex schooling to have more eating disorders than coeducational schooling



Don't boys and girls need to interact with each other in the real world? Would it be harmful to keep them separated for years at a time?

Evaluating a Research Sample (continued...)

Are there any harmful effects of single-sex classrooms?

- According to some research, the benefits of single-sex classrooms apply mainly to girls, who feel free from harassment and the "troublesome" behaviour of boys. Boys, on the other hand, seem to benefit little from a single-sex learning environment.



Don't boys and girls need to interact with each other in the real world? Would it be harmful to keep them separated for years at a time?

- Some researchers suggest that single-sex school environments could also be detrimental to boys. (Note that here the author does not state how specifically the environment can be 'detrimental,' other than suggesting that boys' learning rates do not significantly improve)
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Questions to ask yourself before PPPB:

- **What** conclusions am I coming to?
- **Is** my inference logical? Why?
- **Are** there other conclusions I should consider?
- **Does** this interpretation make sense?

Questions to be worked on as a group:

- **How** did you reach that conclusion?
- **What** are you basing your reasoning on?
- **Is there** an alternative plausible conclusion?
- **Given** all the facts what is the best possible conclusion?

Those who advocate for single-sex education in public schools argue that:

- Some parents don't want their children to be in mixed-gender classrooms because, especially at certain ages, students of the opposite sex can be a distraction.
- Leonard Sax and others agree that merely placing boys in separate classrooms from girls accomplishes little. But single-sex education enhances student success when teachers use techniques geared toward the gender of their students.
- Some research indicates that girls learn better when classroom temperature is warm, while boys perform better in cooler classrooms. If that's true, then the temperature in a single-sex classroom could be set to optimize the learning of either male or female students.
- Some research and reports from educators suggest that single-sex education can broaden the educational prospects for both girls and boys. Advocates claim co-ed schools tend to reinforce gender stereotypes, while single-sex schools can break down gender stereotypes. For example, girls are free of the pressure to compete with boys in male-dominated subjects such as math and science. Boys, on the other hand, can more easily pursue traditionally "feminine" interests such as music and poetry. One mother, whose daughter has attended a girls-only school for three years, shares her experience on the GreatSchools parent community: "I feel that the single gender environment has given her a level of confidence and informed interest in math and science that she may not have had otherwise."
- Federal law supports the option of single-sex education. In 2006, Education Secretary Margaret Spellings eased federal regulations, allowing schools to offer single-sex classrooms and schools, as long as such options are completely voluntary. This move gives parents and school districts greater flexibility.

✓ Point 1

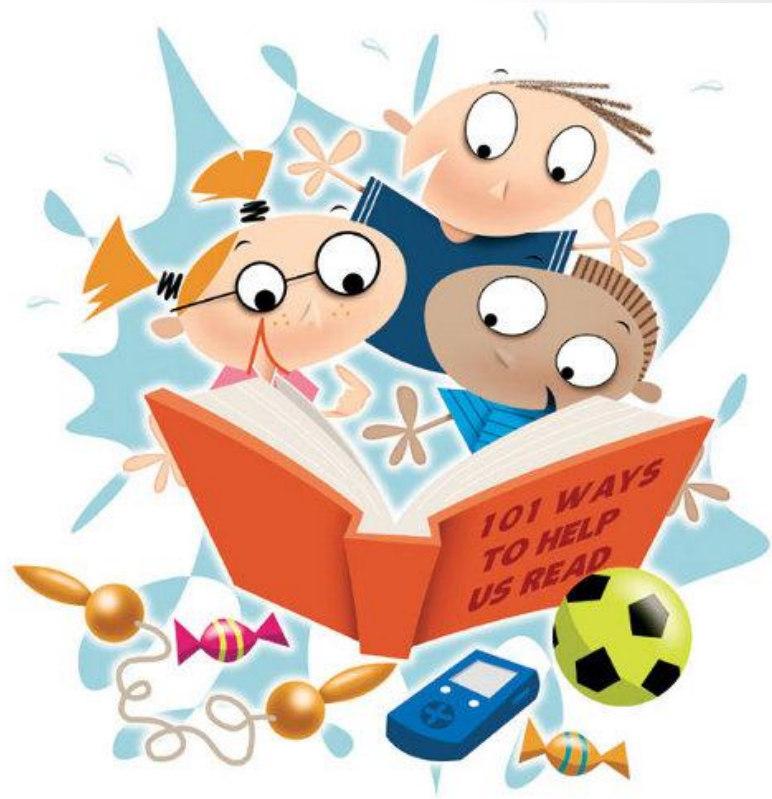
Teacher's
Comments:

Would
gender
stereotypes for Point 2
be a better
point than
just classroom
temperature?

What critics say about single-sex education

Activity 2

The Research Phase



The Scripting Phase

Debate as a Pedagogy for Language Learning at
St. Andrew's Secondary School

Learning Outcomes of Scripting Phase

(Slide 1 of 2)

Students will be able to:
Explain factors that
influence a case

- *Skills:* Understanding people, cultures, authority, governance, consumption, technology, global connections, etc.

Learning Outcomes of Scripting Phase

(Slide 2 of 2)

Students will be able to:
**Exchange ideas and refine
the arguments for the
case**

- *Skills:* Rhetorical analysis, drafting scripts with organisational structure

Students will be able to:
**Examine feedback from
peers and teachers to
adapt and improve**

- *Skills:* Evaluating and revising scripts, editing to present technically sound scripts

Element: Concepts All reasoning is expressed through, and shaped by, **CONCEPTS** and **IDEAS**.

- Identify key concepts and explain them clearly.
- Consider alternative concepts or alternative definitions of concepts.
- Make sure you are using concepts with precision.


Clarify Your... Concepts

Concepts are ideas, theories, laws, principles, or hypotheses we use in thinking to make sense of things.

Be clear about the concepts you are using and use them justifiably.

Questions you can ask about concepts

- What idea am I using in my thinking? Is this idea causing problems for me or for others?
- I think this is a good theory, but could you explain it more fully?
- What is the main hypothesis you are using in your reasoning?
- Are you using this term in keeping with established usage?
- What main distinctions should we draw in reasoning through this problem?
- What idea is this author using in his or her thinking? Is there a problem with it?



Concepts
theories,
definitions, axioms,
laws, principles,
models

A Sample of an Opposition Speaker's Argument

The cultural stereotype is that the perfect classroom is one where the students are sitting still in their chairs facing the teacher. But brain research shows that boys learn better when they are moving - we shouldn't punish them for fidgeting. In a CBC Broadcast (Raising Boys) by Michael Reist, it is mentioned that "freedom ends where the rights of others begin." Teachers must ask themselves "is the fidgeting bothering anyone? Our classrooms should be tolerant of movement. We should give our fidgety male students options: some silly putty or doodling while listening to the teacher. And DON'T take away recess! However, in a co-ed class, this motility may distract the more focused female population.

Evaluating an Opposition Speaker's Argument

The cultural stereotype is that the perfect classroom is one where the students are sitting still in their chairs facing the teacher. But [brain research](#) shows that boys learn better when they are moving - we [shouldn't punish](#) them for [fidgeting](#). In a CBC Broadcast (Raising Boys) by Michael Reist, it is mentioned that "freedom ends where the rights of others begin." Teachers must ask themselves "is the fidgeting bothering anyone? Our classrooms should be [tolerant of movement](#). We should give our fidgety male students options: some silly putty or doodling while listening to the teacher. And DON'T take away recess! However, in a co-ed class, this motility [may distract the more focused female population](#)."

Questions to be worked on as a group:

- **What** theory are we using in our argument?
- **Could** we explain our argument more fully?
- **What** is the main hypothesis we are using in our reasoning?
- **Are** we using certain words correctly?
- **What** are the limitations of this argument?
- **Is this** theory causing problems for myself or for others? (i.e. would the other team use the theory to their advantage instead?)

POINT 2

AGAINST THE ABOLISHMENT:

Sometimes, the teachers ^{sp.} ~~apparently~~ optimise ~~the~~ ~~whole~~ ~~entire~~ lessons towards a single gender. For example, during a physical education lesson, the teacher cannot possibly have the whole class play soccer with both girls and ^(informal) ~~guys~~ together. Therefore, a second teacher is needed and that means the school has to employ a larger staff and it would not be economically ^{viable} ~~good~~ for the school. The classes would not be suited for the girls who are usually kinesthetic learners or not suited for boys who are usually visual learners. This imbalance in learning styles would cause a very major headache for students to ^{grasp} ~~grasp~~ the information and for the preparation of the lesson on the teacher's part. This neverending adjustment for the suitability of the different genders would never end. This is probably one of the reasons why certain people are not used to the idea of ~~becoming a mixed gender school.~~

Why?
Is it
due to
varying
interests?

abolishing single-gender schools.

[Dimension]	4	3	2	1
Context of and Purpose for Writing <i>Includes considerations of audience, purpose, and the circumstances surrounding the writing task(s).</i>	Demonstrates a thorough understanding of context, audience, and purpose that is responsive to the assigned task(s) and focuses all elements of the work.	Demonstrates adequate consideration of context, audience, and purpose and a clear focus on the assigned task(s) (e.g., the task aligns with audience, purpose, and context).	Demonstrates awareness of context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned tasks(s) (e.g., begins to show awareness of audience's perceptions and assumptions).	Demonstrates minimal attention to context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned tasks(s) (e.g., expectation of instructor or self as audience).
Content Development	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject, conveying the writer's understanding, and shaping the whole work.	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to explore ideas within the context of the discipline and shape the whole work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop and explore ideas through most of the work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop simple ideas in some parts of the work.
Genre and Disciplinary Conventions <i>Formal and informal rules inherent in the expectations for writing in particular forms and/or academic fields (please see glossary).</i>	Demonstrates detailed attention to and successful execution of a wide range of conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task (s) including organization, content, presentation, formatting, and stylistic choices	Demonstrates consistent use of important conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s), including organization, content, presentation, and stylistic choices	Follows expectations appropriate to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s) for basic organization, content, and presentation	Attempts to use a consistent system for basic organization and presentation.
Sources and Evidence	Demonstrates skillful use of high-quality, credible, relevant sources to develop ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing	Demonstrates consistent use of credible, relevant sources to support ideas that are situated within the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use credible and/or relevant sources to support ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use sources to support ideas in the writing.
Control of Syntax and Mechanics	Uses graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is virtually error-free.	Uses straightforward language that generally conveys meaning to readers. The language in the portfolio has few errors.	Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers with clarity, although writing may include some errors.	Uses language that sometimes impedes meaning because of errors in usage.

Activity 3

The Scripting Phase



The Debating Phase

Debate as a Pedagogy for Language Learning at
St. Andrew's Secondary School

Learning Outcomes of Debating Phase

(Slide 1 of 2)

Students will be able to:
Exchange ideas in a formal debate setting

- Speaking for conciseness and accuracy

Students will be able to:
Connect with audiences when speaking, influencing viewpoints of audiences

- Understanding the transactional nature of the communication process

Learning Outcomes of Debating Phase

(Slide 2 of 2)

Students will be able to:

Mastering tactics of focusing attention to opposition arguments, taking notes in debate to track coverage

- Managing barriers to listening, listening for diverse purposes

Students will be able to:

Engaging in cross-examination

- Speaking in interpersonal contexts, listening for diverse purposes

Student Name: _____

Performance Elements	4	3	2	1
Persuasive Techniques	The speaker clearly understood the topic in-depth and presented their information persuasively and convincingly. (Used relevant and factual evidence.)	The speaker clearly understood the topic in-depth and presented their information persuasively, using some of relative and factual evidence.	The speaker seemed to understand the main points of the topic and presented these with few attempts to persuade the audience.	The speaker did not show an adequate understanding of the topic and did not attempt to persuade the audience.
Information	All information presented in the debate was clear, accurate and thorough.	Most information presented in the debate was clear, accurate and thorough.	Most information presented in the debate was clear and accurate, but was not usually thorough.	Information had several inaccuracies OR was usually not clear.
Defense of Claims	Every major claim was well supported with several relevant facts, statistics and/or examples.	Every major claim was adequately supported with several relevant facts, statistics and/or examples.	Every major claim was supported with several relevant facts, statistics and/or examples but some were questionable.	Many claims were not supported with relevant facts, statistics and/or examples.
Organization	All arguments were clearly tied to the team's main argument and organized in a tight, logical fashion.	Most arguments were clearly tied to the team's main argument and organized in a tight, logical fashion.	All arguments were clearly tied to the team's main argument but the organization was sometimes not clear or logical	Arguments were not clearly tied to the team's main argument.