

## Advanced Lesson Plans

### Advanced Argumentation

#### A. Goal of the lesson

Experienced debaters should be able to create more complex and highly organized arguments, outperforming basic „SEXI“ structure.

#### B. Activities

##### Discussion (5 – 10 min)

In the beginning, take some time to talk about knowledge your debaters already have in terms of structure and different aspects regarding good argument. You can use different questions, such as:

- What does good argument consist of? Why is ... important for our arguments? („...“ means every answer to the first question)
- What is the basic structure of an argument? Why the statement is not enough?
- Do you remember any problems you had during building any arguments?
- What are the frequest mistakes regarding argumentation?

-After every activity, add one or two sentences about what should debaters learn from particular activity.

##### Theory (20 – 25 min)

Use content provided by Debbie Newman during her [lecture](#) at WDI 2008. Main message of this theoretical part is that you can use advanced structure providing arguments over the level of „Statement-Explanation-Example“ structure.

Newman call the parts of advanced structure „Chunk up – Chunk down – Chunk sideways“. Basically these parts could be translated also into terms such as „Principle – Application – Delineation“.

Before explanation of each part, you should use the same example as Newman do – 2 arguments, basically providing same message, but in 2 different ways of delivery. You can see them below. After presenting them (it is ok to read them, but it would be more effective to do it by yourself), ask the debaters, which delivery they liked better. Ask also for explanation of their opinions. Then come to explanation.

**Statement:** Video games presenting forms of violence should be banned, because depiction of violence as a form of entertainment si immoral

**Arguments:**

##### Form 1:

Ladies and gentlemen, my first argument is based on an idea that even if people playing violent video games do not become criminals, it is immoral and unaccptable to show violence as part of entertainment. It is so because in society, we have standards for acceptance of of some kinds of beaviour and values. But we are pushing these away in case we provide people with violent video games. It is sending mixed message if during playing Grand Theft Auto players are rewarded for beating up women in the street with a baseball bat, since normally violence is an

unacceptable form of behaviour. If society agrees violence is not welcomed in social interactions, we should refuse violent video games.

### Form 2:

Ladies and gentlemen, base for my first argument is the belief we do not want to live in a society, which accept violence as a form of entertainment. In principle, if we as a society agree something is harmful and dangerous, if we try to create environment without bad effects to raise healthy generation in, we should not entertain people with bad examples of behaviour. Because if we do so, we make it harder to make the process of social agreement work, especially in terms of harmful symptoms and values we deem necessary. By having violence in video games as a part of entertainment, we send a mixed message and make probability of violence in society higher. If you, for example, play Grand Theft Auto, where you are gaining money or points for beating up women in the street with a baseball bat, your thoughts and ethical principles are changing and violence is viewed as part of social life. We have lots of harmful influence we do not use as entertaining tool. For example, you do not see games allowed, where the goal is to take as much drugs as possible, because we understand that it is not a matter of fun. And never should be. So if we agree there are parts of behaviour we should push away from everyday social life, we should finally take such stance also in case of violent video games.

### **Exercise (20 – 25 min)**

Prepare 2 motions and one statements, which will be basis for arguments. It is easier to do this exercise if you tell debaters which arguments they should develop. You can use (or be inspired by) following:

1.

Motion: THBT it should be legal for people to sell their own body organs

Argument – Government should not ban selling body organs, because selling part of you should be your free decision, if you do not harm other people.

2.

Motion: THW ban all casinos

Argument – Government should ban all casinos, because there is a high probability of losing big amount of money for attending gamblers.

A volunteer should try to present argument using new structure. Give people 2-3 minutes to think this through. After presenting the argument, have a short discussion about the perception of debaters – what they liked and what could be done even better. You can ask someone to present the same argument after this discussion, or you can do it by yourself. Then do the exact same exercise again with different motion and argument.

### **C. Preparation**

Look through the lecture by Debbie Newman (link above). It is important to understand the key parts of advanced argumentation. There are also people trying the structure, which could show you how the exercise could look like.

You can also go through other literature, for example Chapter 2: The Structure of Argument by Robert Trapp in *Discovering the World Through Debate* (Trapp et al., 2005). This will provide you with different perspectives on structuring arguments, which could be used for example during discussion from the beginning.

Prepare at least 2 motions, each of them with pre-prepared argument (in statement-form) to use during exercise. You can also use other than added above. Be sure you are using arguments you can develop following key structure by yourself.

#### **D. Hints**

Do not forget to make sure people presenting arguments during the exercise are okay to be „evaluated“ afterwards. It could be hard to see criticism as a way to learn if not stated before.

It is possible there will be questions you are not sure you can provide answers to. In that case, do not hesitate to tell the truth and promise to think about the question and answering it next time.

#### **E. Verification**

It is very important to conclude the meeting with couple of questions, which will help you know if your lesson was successful. You can, for example, use questions as:

- What parts of argument structure did you learn today? Why is each of them important?
- What is the most interesting information about argument structure you have got during this meeting?

Also, make sure all people understand the main messages of this lecture. You should do this after every part of theory, but also at the end of the meeting.

Inform your debaters, that it is almost certain they will not adapt to the structure immediately, but they have to train it a lot. That should prevent them from early disappointment if the structure will not work for them in first debates after the lecture.





