

## Evidence

### A. Goal of the lesson

At the end of the session, students will be able to develop arguments through analysing and evaluating evidence. This lesson is also very much useful for training of analysing evidence outside of debate context.

### B. Activities

#### Discussion (10 min)

Trainer starts the lesson with a discussion, highlighting social media as it connects us, but also can provide rumours, myths, and misinformation.

Example questions for the discussion:

*Where do you get information from?, How do you know if these stories are true?, Is it difficult to distinguish if something is true without evidence?, Where do news stories come from?, etc.*

#### Exercise (15 min)

Pairs of students are given red, yellow and green cards. Each pair of students gets:

- one red card ("fake information");
- one yellow card ("not sure");
- one green card ("true").

Trainer reads headlines from prepared list of articles from newspaper and news websites, and students have 15 seconds after each headline to decide if it was true or fake information, after this they show one of the cards.

Then students are asked to put down some criteria they categorized the headlines with as fake or true. Also, it is important to know what made them not to be sure to answer.

Each group presents their criteria how to evaluate if information is true or false. This should be followed by short discussion.

#### Lecture (15 min)

Introduce theory behind evidence in debate. Try to create some list of principles and important information that could be easily memorised. Be aware the more different information you will provide, the more difficult it will be to remember them all – pick important info carefully.

You can, for example use .....

#### Discussion (10-20 min)

Trainer provides students with prepared checklist for evaluating evidence (see an example of checklist in F. Theory below).

Students discuss the questions from the checklist, find out the most important ones, describe qualities of reliable evidence, etc.

### C. Preparation

Teacher prepares a list of headlines of newspaper/online media stories, etc. (some of them are rumours/myths/ misinformation);

Teacher prepares red, yellow and green cards.

#### **D. Hints**

Teacher must prepare the latest information for the list of headlines and add the source where is each headline from.

#### **E. Verification**

Every trainer should use conclusion of the training as a verification method, and also a method to make people memorise what they learned. You can, for example, use questions like:

- What is the most important you learned today?
- How important is media literacy in your life? How important is it in debate?
- What principles should you think of when using evidence in debate/arguments?

#### **F. Theory**

Valuable information can be found [HERE](#).

#### Evaluating Evidence: A Checklist

- Is the evidence up-to-date?
- Is the evidence relevant? Evidence that doesn't directly support your point may not belong in your essay.
- Is the evidence sufficient? The more complex your topic is, the more evidence you will need to support your claim.
- Is your example similar to other examples you could have chosen, or does it present an extreme or atypical situation? Examples that present typical situations are usually most effective.
- Does your example illustrate your point?
- Is the source of the data trustworthy? If you cannot find full documentation of source material or if the material does not come from a familiar source, it may not serve as appropriate support.
- Are abstract or controversial terms (*poverty, humane treatment, etc.*) clearly defined? Statistics often have little meaning without an explanation of how key terms are defined by the source of the data. If you're using statistics to compare, are you comparing equal units? For example, if you're comparing population statistics, be sure that both statistics refer to the same geographical unit—city, metropolitan area, county, etc.
- Is the source of an opinion qualified to give an opinion on the subject? Is he/she associated with a reputable institution? What is his/her profession? Are his/her credentials relevant? Be sure to include the source's credentials in your essay in case your reader is not familiar with the source.

- Is the opinion of an expert likely to be biased in any way? If any special interest is evident (economic, political, ideological, etc.), consider further research before you accept or reject the opinion.
- Does the source of the opinion provide the evidence upon which his/her claim is based? Just as you must support your argument, your sources should provide proof that their information is valid (Prescott Colledge).

(Prescott Colledge. (2018) *Resources for Learning*. Available:

<http://www.prescott.edu/library/learning-commons/writing-center/thesis-support-evaluating->