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USING DEBATE TO IMPROVE VERBAL SKILLS

Debate is one of the latest techniques of teaching foreign languages. It is a tool which can be used to improve verbal skills. Practice shows that participating in debates requires a strong knowledge of both the foreign language and the topic of the debate. The teacher has several responsibilities in preparing for the debate. First, the teacher should choose a topic based on the students' area of study. Next, he or she should define the structure of the debate according to the students' language level and the knowledge of the topic to be debated.

Usually, students prepare for debates beforehand. They collect as much information as possible on the topic from the "pro" point of view and the "con" point of view. The students should enrich their knowledge of not only their future field but also different aspects of human life such as psychology, ecology, etc. they will also learn to use different sources of information such as books, mass media, internet and so on. The next stage entails synthesizing the information obtained from the above sources and writing a report on the resolution reflecting all the "pluses" and "minuses" of the subject. If it is possible, the report can be in the form of a table.

The last step is the debate itself. Debates can be divided in one of two ways depending on the desire of students. In the first option, the teacher divides the class into two groups. One group will take the "pro" position and the other will take the "con" position. A chairman or a captain is needed to control and conduct the debate. Usually the chairman is one of the best students and has good verbal skills and a strong knowledge of the topic. The teacher can also be a captain. His job is to help anyone from the groups during the debate. The time limit for the presentation must be less than 5 minutes. After all of the presentations have been made, the captain summarizes the views on the topic made by the students. Any questions may be addressed to the whole class. When the subject is exhausted, the teacher summarizes the results of the debate and makes a final conclusion.

As one can see, debate improves verbal skills, enriches the students' knowledge in different fields and sciences touches on the key problems of the human life, and develops students' logical and analytical skills.

Special attention must be paid to selecting the debate topic. It is important to pay attention to the fact that the subject must have elements of controversy. Several topics for debate with respect to environmental protection are given below:

1. Mineral resources are inexhaustible. 2. Urbanization is a moving force of modern life. 3. Rives are inexhaustible sources of water. 4. Opencast mining does not damage the environment. 5. There are no problems with underground water. 6. We cannot imagine our spare time without video and television. 7. One cannot imagine life without a computer and internet. 8. Tamagochi is the best toy for children all over the world.

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