

## **Activity: Student debating workshop (February 2015)**

**Addresses:** Teamwork; Communication

### **Aims/Intended Learning Outcomes:**

At the end of this activity, students should be able to:

- Plan and participate in a workshop on debating in a student context
- Demonstrate an understanding of teamwork in preparing for an impromptu debate
- Demonstrate the ability to prepare and present a case in a debate environment
- Apply their understanding of the targeted competencies in a practical way
- Evaluate the success of the activity in terms of the required competencies.

**Time required:** 180 minutes

**Group size:** The group consists of approx. 10 students, led by a trainer and a student leader who is an experienced debater.

**Context/setting:** This occurred in a large meeting room with space for small group work and brainstorming.

### **Description:**

- (1) The starting point for the activity was an initial meeting between the trainer and student leader, an experienced college debater: the trainer explained the background to the project and the competencies being targeted, namely teamwork and communication.
- (2) The activity was student-led, with the student leader planning the workshop, in line with guidelines given by the trainer: it involves up to 10 students, with a bias towards those inexperienced in debating.
- (3) The students broke into pairs to consider three possible debate titles in turn, each devised by the student leader in consultation with the trainer. Then each group was asked to present for no more than four minutes to the group, with the time being divided between each person.
- (4) Then each group was given the opportunity to engage in rebuttal (respond) to points made by any other group.
- (5) Finally one member of each group was given a minute to sum up their argument.

(6) Following the workshop, the trainer facilitated a session in which firstly, students gave feedback to the student leader and subsequently discussed among themselves the learning gleaned from the activity.

The description was reviewed by another colleague who was also a trainer on another element of the DARE project. No additional material was required.

**Variations:** N/A

**Materials needed:** a meeting room with AV for a Powerpoint presentation; markers and paper for brainstorming.

**Behind the activity:**

**Inspired and conducted by Ludivine Rebet (TCD Phil)**

**Any other comments:** This local activity proved valuable as an exercise in informal learning, in part by enhancing the skills and confidence of participants, but more importantly in fostering an appreciation of teamwork in a pressurized environment and encouraging improved understandings of communication in a public setting.