

2014

Debate

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Recommended Citation

Gaughan, K. (2020) Debate, Learning, Teaching & Technology Centre , Technological University Dublin.

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Title: Debate

Lecturer: Kevin Gaughan

Programme and year on which assessment was offered

MSc Energy Management (Energy Supply)

Description

This is a work in progress. The idea is that a number of topics are selected that are relevant to the subject material, beyond the scope of lectures. Students are assigned to groups and then told which side of the debate they are on. Some sides/opinions are more popular but, like a lawyer, the idea is to present the best case/argument possible, independent of their own beliefs.

A debate is then held in class, teams of 4/5, with the whole class observing (15-20 mins per topic). Structure is the students present their cases, then there is time allowed for rebuttal. There is no Q&A from the class.

Students are judged on presentations, some marks for speaking but also on handouts which must be provided (& correctly referenced). This mark is about the research carried out, based on academic grounds i.e. quality of argument and research. All points must be supported but do not have to be unbiased.

Individuals attend all debates and review debates. They must state their position before, summary of debate and judgement following the debate.

Marking is independent of winning or losing.

An alternative offline version could be run (if class time not an option) where the debate is held externally and the results are presented only. This could be achieved through videos/forums etc.

Why did you use this assessment?

This fits into the nature of the course. It is very broad (real world/real politics). It encourages the students to find information external to class.

It deals with ambiguous/uncertain/fuzzy knowledge. Students are forced to take a side and argue but also to choose within individual elements. This method is engaging for lecturer and students. Topics change based on current events.

Why did you change to this form of assessment?

This method is more interactive and engaging. For larger classes poster presentations are more suited (less class time taken). The adversarial aspect encourages students to "ferret" out all of the information (rebuttal marks provided). This encourages students to

rely on non- traditional resources i.e. not the text book. It also encourages research methods development as they must check their sources.

How do you give feedback to students?

Immediate informal feedback is given at the end of the debate. The written submission is then marked separately.

What have you found are the advantages of using this form of assessment?

Presentation feedback is instantaneous

Self-awareness of performance

Every student is encouraged to learn from others work (attend and report)

What have you found are the dis-advantages of using this form of assessment?

Time to mark written submission

Classroom time for very large classes (30 students = 3 hrs). Would suggest offline version would be more time efficient.

If another lecturer was using this assessment method would you have any tips for them?

Think carefully about group size (<30 students)

Pick topics carefully (student selection not great)

Lawyer role beneficial.

Make sure individual element (mechanism for individual contribution encouraged),

Avoid more technical topics.

Resist all attempts by students to think for them! You MUST remain impartial.

Do you have any feedback from students about this assessment?

Very positive feedback from students.

Developing own arguments.

Participation.

Interesting and enjoyable.

Additional Comments

Very good results, very positive, useful learning occurs.

Compared to traditional presentations: better learning and engagement.

Resources

Debate Assignment

The Great Debate Energy Supply Assignment February 2013

Requirement: Each panel will be given a motion from the field of energy supply and will be assigned a side either for or against. The debates will be held during class time early in the second half of the semester.

Following the debates each class member must produce an individual review of the debates other than their own. In this review they must summarise the key arguments for and against. They must weigh the arguments on either side and they must form a judgement either for or against.

Note 1: Research should normally aim to be unbiased but in this case you are being asked to take a side. Nevertheless you are still required to adopt academic rigour in every other respect. Arguments should be based on evidence rather than opinion and your research should be supported by credible references.

Note 2: Each group will be assigned for or against the motion. It is quite possible you will end up arguing a position you do not really believe in. Nevertheless you are still required to present your case to the best of your ability.

Deliverables

1. Group Debate: The debates will take the following format: Presentation for the motion (Powerpoint or similar) (12 minutes) Presentation against the motion (Powerpoint or similar) (12 minutes) Rebuttal by Against side. (2 minutes) Rebuttal by For side. (2 minutes) Deliverables: 1. Group Participation in the Debate 2. A summary report for the class containing your slides and supporting material. This must be fully referenced.

2. Individual Review (of all motions except your own): -A personal reflection of your knowledge and opinions about the motions before the debate. -A summary of the key arguments for and against the motions. -A reasoned judgement either for or against the motions with an explanation for your

conclusion. This must be referenced although it is expected that most of the information will come from the original debates.

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- **NB individual review has a Maximum of 12 A4 pages**
- **Marking : The overall assignment is worth 50% of the module grade broken down as follows:**
- **Group Assignment: Value 25%. Marks will be based on Content (argument and rebuttal), Delivery and Handout. Handout must be fully referenced.**
- **Individual Assignment: Value 25%. Marks will be based on Content and Presentation. Report must be appropriately referenced.**
- **Deadline: Group Report – submitted via Webcourses on or before Tuesday 9th April Debates will be held during class time on Tuesday 9th April**
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- **Motions Motion 1: In the future Ireland will become a net exporter of energy. Motion 2: The future of the automobile is electric. Motion 3: Renewable Energy is unsustainable.**

Debate Marking

MSc Debate Score sheet Lecturer: Kevin Gaughan Date: -----

Proposition

For / Anti

Students

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Content Evidence / Logic (40%) Refutation (10%)

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Delivery Organisation 15% Delivery 15%

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Handout 10% References 10%

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Overall

Signed: _____