

## Aufsatz

# Debating In and Outside the Classroom: Key Benefits, Challenges, and How We May Help\*

Balázs Venkovits

Institute of English and American Studies  
University of Debrecen  
Egyetem tér 1.  
H-4032 Debrecen  
balazs.venkovits@gmail.com

### **Abstract**

The objective of this paper is to provide a useful overview of the key benefits and challenges of introducing the teaching and development of debating skills in the classroom both in high schools and universities. Besides such a theoretical and practical overview, the paper aims to serve as a reference point for people planning to introduce new instructional methods into their practice and improve communication and critical thinking skills of their students in an environment that encourages active student involvement and offers strong motivation for participants. The paper provides an overview of the most often mentioned benefits of using the debate method, together with the most widely voiced fears and worries related to this instructional tool. This includes a more detailed discussion of the possible role of debates in a Hungarian educational context. At the end, the paper introduces three brief case studies of various projects started at the University of Debrecen and aimed at popularizing the use of the debate format for educational purposes in Hungary: a nation-wide debate competition for high school students, an e-learning material for current and future educators, and the implementation of university-level courses to diversify the curriculum of the teacher-training program.

*Keywords:* debate, debating, curriculum, skills development, innovation, competition, e-learning, high school, university

---

\* The publication is supported by the EFOP-3.6.1-16-2016-00022 project. The project is co-financed by the European Union and the European Social Fund.

## Introduction

The ability to think critically, good communication skills, openness, willingness to cooperate, self-confidence, ability to work as part of a team as well as individually; this is an often seen list of requirements both in job advertisements and educational programs. These abilities are also frequently listed as key attributes of responsible citizens who are capable of making well-informed and well-grounded decisions about their lives and that of their communities. Therefore, the improvement of such skills is a major expectation towards today's schools both from the perspective of users (students and parents) as well as legislators. Thus, educators have the important task of arming their students with skills that are to be used not only at school but also at the future workplace, in business, private life, and social interactions. At the same time, they are expected to do so in an environment that is engaging for 21<sup>st</sup>-century students, keeping them motivated, interested, and active while they are bombarded with information in contexts that the traditional school setting is struggling to compete with. To be able to satisfy these demands, teachers need to look for novel or re-contextualized methods and tools, one of which could involve the use of debates in the classroom that clearly contributes to the development of the above-listed skills and satisfies the mentioned requirements.

Debates may be used in a great variety of settings and with a diversity of objectives to improve many of the key skills and competences required from a modern educational institution. Using debates either in a formal classroom or as part of extracurricular activities offers an approach that is motivating, stimulating, and rewarding for all participants. With its emphasis on openness, communication, cooperation, and argumentation, it may prove to be a strong tool in language education, history, cultural studies, but also in public speaking or leadership courses.

Debates have been used widely in several school systems, for example, in the United States, where they form an integral part of the curriculum with educational institutions offering extracurricular activities, along with debate programs, competitions, etc. for students. This is true both at the university and high school level. It has shorter traditions in other parts of the world, including Hungary, where despite a general interest in this method, it has still not been integrated fully into the curriculum of most schools. Attempts have been made in this respect already at the time of the change of regime in the early 1990s with the foundation of the Hungarian debate movement (*Disputa mozgalom*), competitions have started (both in Hungarian and later in English), several schools established debate circles nationally, but debating is still not widely and generally used in educational settings. This happens, despite that fact that debates improve exactly those competences and skills that are often in demand and which are often neglected in schools. For the popularization of this teaching and learning

tool, high school teachers first need to realize its benefits in their practice, then need specific training (which is still lacking in teacher training) to be able to fully integrate the teaching of debate culture into their work, and students also need to be immersed into this educational experience by providing various motivating contexts for them. We have started various educational projects to contribute to this process and (re)introduce the debate method for more and more people.

### **Benefits of Debating In and Outside the Classroom**

Many people have already described and confirmed the multitude of benefits of using debates for educational purposes in varied contexts and studies. Former U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan argued at a speech for the National Association of Urban Debate Leagues in 2012 that competitive debate could be seen as a best practice to educate people who are proficient in the 4 “Cs” of 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills—critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity, and also a fifth, civic awareness.<sup>1</sup> He also argued that debates boost participant’s college readiness and their chance to succeed in life. In his book introducing debates for non-native English speakers, Gary Rybold contends that debating improves public speaking, critical thinking, and a host of other skills, including note taking, organizing, researching, writing, listening, and people skills (Rybold 2006). Ruth Kennedy also argues that in-class debates provide a fertile ground for active learning, critical thinking, and the improvement of oral communication skills among others (Kennedy 2007).

Besides these key competences, debates are also often praised for boosting student’s confidence and self-esteem (Hofkins). Well-chosen debate motions help students learn about the outside world, their environment, and key issues around them, while acquiring skills that will prove to be useful during the rest of their lives. “[T]he art of debate involves mastering skills of obvious intrinsic value: the confidence to speak in public, and make sense; the construction of a logical argument; the ability to read an audience’s reactions; and, perhaps most importantly, the willingness to hear others’ arguments, and to respond to them” (Clark).

Based on our experience and feedback from the three projects introduced below, the introduction of the debate method in the classroom brings major benefits to teachers and students alike. Participating in debates has both short and long-term benefits for individuals as the debate format is widely believed to

---

<sup>1</sup> American Debate League, „Benefits of Debate”. Available at: <http://www.americandebateleague.org/benefits-of-debate.html>

- develop oral and written communication and presentation skills,
- improve critical thinking skills and provide a chance to use them in practice,
- boost student self-confidence,
- accelerate learning across the curriculum,
- teach cooperation and team work,
- provide effective tools for research and the organization of knowledge,
- foster openness and tolerance,
- contribute to the emergence of leadership skills.
- improve grammar, vocabulary and rhetorical skills,
- and make people more sensitive to controversial issues in their daily lives.

At the same time, debates develop not only soft skills but students can gain a deeper understanding of the course materials themselves, master the contents of the classes, develop a personal relationship with the acquired knowledge, and thus debating may have a unique role in the entire learning process (Hunya 1998). The focus is shifted from the teacher to the students, encouraging independent work and studying, empowering students and giving them responsibility by expecting them to work more on their own in an active relationship with others. As Kennedy also notes, “students learn more effectively by actively analyzing, discussing, and applying content in meaningful ways rather than by passively absorbing information [...] therefore, students benefit when instructors utilize instructional strategies that promote active engagement” (183). We should not forget either that “students place a higher value on learning by participating than on learning by being lectured at and receiving information passively” (Kennedy 183).

Using debates in the Hungarian classroom is of great significance also because Hungarian students do not necessarily need more subject knowledge but need guidance on how they should use their knowledge in practice, how they should work on their own, and how they should be more willing to speak their minds, present arguments, and listen to others at the same time. Debates also provide a great tool to replace the dominant lecture format of classes, giving more way to innovation and creative ideas. The debate method clearly helps with all this as it improves communication skills, encourages logical thinking, and individual work as well as collaboration, while improving the participants’ personality as well in multiple ways (Hunya 1998).

As we will see below, the use of this method may also be linked with the objectives of the Hungarian core curriculum. The currently effective curriculum also stresses the importance of students being able to express their opinion freely, organize their ideas, develop and share arguments and counterarguments. At the same time, a new draft curriculum emphasizes

such skills and fosters the improvement of debate culture even more specifically. By providing new impulses in the usual educational context, debates may provide a motivating setting in which students enjoy learning. Meanwhile, the method serves as an important tool of community building as well; it is often mentioned by teachers that the exchange of information and ideas continues beyond the debate and strong communities are built.

The method may be used in a great variety of settings and may practically be used in any high school class: its use in foreign language education is quite straightforward, but it may also be used in many other classes where these skills are essential. They could even be used in the education of business, history or science classes, and even to improve the communication of health professionals (Hall 2011). In all of these settings, students are encouraged to look for real solutions for real problems and engage in social innovation.

While we usually focus on the perspective of students when talking about benefits, the use of the debate method offers several advantages for the teacher as well. It enables cooperation between teachers in an often interdisciplinary manner. It makes it possible for teachers to introduce more varied class structures, while after a certain time it involves less preparation, contributes to more active students, and less frontal teaching. With the integration of debates into the classroom and extra-curricular activities teachers can respond to a real need from the part students, higher education institutions, and employers.

### **Challenges of Debating in the Classroom**

As any other instructional tool and method, the use of debates is not without difficulties and challenges either. This is especially true when someone only begins to use the method and tries to introduce or reintroduce it at an institution. As Kennedy also notes, there are opponents to this method as well: some assert that debates reinforce a bias toward dualism, other opponents believe that participation in a debate merely reinforces a student's existing beliefs rather than promoting an objective analysis of an issue, while yet another group of people worry that in most debates only two to six students participate actively and there is a chance that a number of students remain passive participants only (Kennedy). Of course, consideration must be given to these worries as well, but debating is not a single method that is set into stone and Kennedy also nicely presents how with some additions or modifications most of these issues could be tackled.

Based on our contacts with high school teachers in the various projects introduced below, there are also several practical issues and obstacles that

many educators mention when it comes to the use of the debate method in the classroom. In what follows, we would like to address some of these and also offer possible answers, solutions to the fears mentioned.<sup>2</sup>

“Debating is not for everyone”

The first time people start working with the debate method, they often worry that some of the students would not like the debate format or would not even be suitable for debating. It is probably true that not all students are ready to debate immediately: it might cause extra stress for them to speak in front of other people or their language skills might not be developed enough to express complex ideas, for example; however, initially other roles may be assigned to these students during debates, like judging the debates or keeping time, and they can play an active role. There is a need to choose the right (and interesting) motion, pre-teach vocabulary, and prepare students for debating to avoid these issues. Meanwhile, there are various methods, exercises that prepare students slowly and playfully and give them some time to get used to this learning environment. Argumentation, public speaking, collaboration may all be learned and developed and debating may be made suitable for the great majority of people. Also, we should not start with regular, longer debates right away but with games or short debates on topics that are of interest for the students. Once debating becomes more natural and they feel more relaxed, all students would be more likely to participate as active debaters also.

“There is no time for it, we already have too much to do”

One of the most often heard concerns is that debating takes too much time and thus it cannot be fit into daily practice. It is true that teachers need to be competent in organizing and judging debates, which takes time, but after acquiring the basic skills, it is not the teacher that is in the center doing all the talking and preparation but the students. The teacher has to be present and guide the debates but at the same time should also play the role of a mediator and should not be the one in control. This, after a while saves time for the teachers and allows them to focus on useful feedback, cooperation with students, and detailed assessment rather than preparing for lectures. We should also note that we are not arguing for using debates all the time and in all classes, but when the topic to be discussed is suitable for such an instructional method, after a while it rather saves time for the teacher to use this format. If the format is not overused, it is also more

---

<sup>2</sup> This section is adapted from the e-learning material developed in collaboration with Zsuzsanna Lénárt-Muszka, titled “Vita és innováció: Bevezetés a vitamódster használatába a tanórán és azon kívül” and introduced below.

motivating for students to learn this way which also brings extra benefits for teachers using the method.

“It would only end up in useless quarrels”

Teaching debating and debate culture actually makes it less likely that students would only argue endlessly with each other. By teaching debate culture we also teach students about logical fallacies, the importance of listening to the other side and respecting other people’s opinions, they learn about tolerance, reliable and unreliable sources, etc. We actually make them aware of real arguments and intelligent debates, thus we may have the chance to improve the behavior of teenagers in conflicts in general. Educational debates are structured debates that require many skills and knowledge that actually serve as a basis of avoiding quarrels in the classroom and rather focus on debates. One cannot judge in advance what kind of emotional reactions may be evoked by a debate motion, thus quarrels may occur from time to time, however, the more advanced debaters students become, the less likely this would be. If it still occurs, we might use a post-debate discussion where students tell each other how they felt and why, and we can discuss the most important matters.

“It cannot be fit into the national core curriculum”

First it seems that the Hungarian core curriculum does not necessarily support the use of debates in the classroom as it is not a core and specifically mentioned component of it and has no long traditions in Hungarian education. However, after seeing the key benefits of debating, we might easily recognize that most of the subjects mentioned and the key competences specified by the most important Hungarian educational documents are in harmony with the most often mentioned skills and competences developed by debating.

The skills that may be developed with the use of the debate method are also in line with the key competences defined by the European Union and articulated by the current National Core Curriculum (NAT) as well<sup>3</sup> and its most recent draft made available in 2018 for discussion and consultation.<sup>4</sup> In 2006 the European Union identified the following 8 key competences for lifelong learning that they claim are fundamental for each individual in a knowledge-based society:<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Available at: [http://ofi.hu/sites/default/files/attachments/mk\\_nat\\_20121.pdf](http://ofi.hu/sites/default/files/attachments/mk_nat_20121.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Available at: [https://www.oktatas2030.hu/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/a-nemzeti-alaptanterv-tervezete\\_2018.08.31.pdf](https://www.oktatas2030.hu/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/a-nemzeti-alaptanterv-tervezete_2018.08.31.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM%3Ac11090>

1. Communicating in a mother tongue: ability to express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions both orally and in writing.
2. Communicating in a foreign language: as above, but includes mediation skills (i.e. summarising, paraphrasing, interpreting or translating) and intercultural understanding.
3. Mathematical, scientific and technological competence: sound mastery of numeracy, an understanding of the natural world and an ability to apply knowledge and technology to perceived human needs (such as medicine, transport or communication).
4. Digital competence: confident and critical usage of information and communications technology for work, leisure and communication.
5. Learning to learn: ability to effectively manage one's own learning, either individually or in groups.
6. Social and civic competences: ability to participate effectively and constructively in one's social and working life and engage in active and democratic participation, especially in increasingly diverse societies.
7. Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship: ability to turn ideas into action through creativity, innovation and risk taking as well as ability to plan and manage projects.
8. Cultural awareness and expression: ability to appreciate the creative importance of ideas, experiences and emotions in a range of media such as music, literature and visual and performing arts.

Based on the above-presented overview of the key benefits of debating, we can see a clear correlation between the use of the debate method and these key competences. These competences are clearly supported by the preparation process for debates, the actual debate and the learning process involved, while others could be developed indirectly by means of choosing relevant motions for educational purposes.

As part of an international research project, Márta Hunya studied the extent to which the key educational documents in Hungary and the available textbooks foster and enable the teaching of debating and arguing in the classroom. After a detailed overview, she concluded that the use of the debate method in education helps the implementation of the core values and principles of the Hungarian core curriculum as well as the realization of common standards and requirements (Hunya 2002). Debates may play a significant role in such subjects (educational areas) as the mother tongue and literature, living foreign languages, sociology, environmental studies, IT, etc., while it is only mathematics and physical education where its role might be negligible.

The draft version of the new Hungarian core curriculum aims to reform the contents of Hungarian public education, its stated vision is for schools of the future to provide such forms of educational content that is characterized by the balance of knowledge and skills, and with which students first and foremost need to learn how to learn. It emphasizes the need to develop innovative and creative thinking, communication, conflict management, critical thinking, life management skills, and digital citizenship. It is also mentioned as a mission of future schools to facilitate the creation of a balance between personal happiness, social success, competition and cooperation, thus emphasizing basic human (e.g., justice, integrity, respect for ourselves and others) and social (e.g., solidarity, cooperation, responsibility, freedom) values as the fundamental principles of schools of the future as well.

While the use of the debate method in education may be prompted by the realization of the link between the competences listed in the core curriculum and the benefits of this educational tool, there are also direct references to the importance of debating, argumentation and the need for the improvement of “debate culture” in the document itself. Just to list a few examples, among the educational objectives we may find the teaching of cooperation and mutual respect in social relations; in this respect students should be able in case of social conflicts (besides identifying the problems) to look for possible solutions, articulate ideas, and acknowledge and consider the ideas of others. They are also expected to accept and respect the rules, and learn the conflict management methods to be used in the case of disagreements and debates. When discussing active citizenship as an educational objective, the document states that educators should provide opportunities for students to familiarize themselves with debate culture, to practice argumentation, and manage conflicts so that students may plan and practice the roles of their adulthood with greater awareness and in a better informed manner.

Debating is mentioned several times in the document practically for all grades and is included among the areas and skills to be developed. Thus the development of debate culture seems to play an important role in various stages of the learning process. Therefore, such a context (once the draft is accepted) provides an excellent opportunity for the introduction and more extensive use of the debate method in Hungarian classrooms. Moreover, it seems that teachers of the future will be expected to know about the method, both its theory and practice and will be expected to integrate debates into their teaching portfolio. To do so, however, educators first need to see the key benefits of using debates in and outside the classroom and overcome the most often mentioned fears and obstacles. Then, they need to be prepared to be able to introduce this method in practice and use it successfully. For this purpose they will need learning materials, lesson

plans, and practice that is difficult to achieve without any help. Thus in the next section we will provide an overview of how we are working on helping them in this respect and promoting this method more widely.

### **How We May Help: Projects and Case Studies**

The aim of this section is to provide practical ideas and a reference point for those who are planning to use debates in an educational setting. At the Institute of English and American Studies, University of Debrecen, we have started various projects the aim of which is to introduce the benefits of debating to a wider audience and offer help for current and future teachers who are planning to use this method. We believe there is a need to start in high schools in a way that provides a motivating environment for both teachers and students to get engaged in debating. We first started a national (English language) debate competition for high school students to provide such an environment for teachers and students alike where they can see the direct benefits of spending time with debates. As the next step, we also put together an e-learning material that may be used by teachers who would like to familiarize themselves with the method or who are looking for possible ways of integrating new instructional tools into their practice. Thirdly, we have also started a university-level course with the debate method at its core that we are planning to extend and offer for all students in the teacher-training program. With these projects we are trying to help both students and teachers get access to tools that they could benefit from professionally and personally alike. At the same time, these three projects can contribute to the more extensive use of debates in the Hungarian educational setting and thus to the improvement of key skills and competences listed above.

#### **1) DEbate Competition for High School Students**

We started an English-language debate competition (called DEbate) for Hungarian high schools in 2015. This by now has become a national competition with schools participating from all over Hungary in an increasing number. Sponsors from both the business and educational, cultural sector have come to support the program that is now in its fourth year. Based on teacher and student feedback, the competition has managed to fill a gap and is by now a much awaited opportunity by students who would like to show and test their skills. It also serves as a motivating environment that can help the popularization of debating partly thanks to the sponsors who provide valuable prizes.

Teams of three students compete with each other in various rounds. First, the teams need to prepare and submit a creative project as an application to the competition. Based on these applications, we select 24 teams who can proceed to the semi-finals that are held at three locations, in three different high schools (at Avasi Gimnázium in Miskolc, Kölcsey Ferenc Gimnázium in Nyíregyháza, and Ady Endre Gimnázium in Debrecen). The semi-finals offer an excellent opportunity for us to meet teachers, students, and the representatives of the different schools and assess their needs and reactions to such a competition. Based on their performance in the semi-finals, the 10 best teams proceed to the finals that are held at the University of Debrecen. At each round, the participants compete using the rules of the Karl Popper debate format. They receive the motion to be debated several weeks before the competition, thus they have time to prepare in advance. Which side they need to argue for is decided on the spot (except for the finals, where all teams need to argue on both the affirmative and the opposition side).

This project of ours proved several important suppositions: there is a group of talented and devoted teachers who have already worked with students for years in various debate clubs (mostly based on their own initiative) and who are looking for opportunities to further improve their students' skills through competitions. There is also another group of teachers who would be interested in participation but do not yet have the necessary background to prepare debate teams. Also, students find such a competition to be attractive and motivating and they are willing to spend extra hours after school to prepare for it.

One of the key benefits of organizing this competition for us was that we could establish a network of teachers and schools we could cooperate with on the long run, and we could also identify the needs of teachers working (or wishing to work) with the debate method in Hungarian high schools. To attract more teachers into the competition and also to help those who would like to use the method, we thought a training material would be needed that could serve as a reference point for teachers. We also wanted to use our experience and introduce the method at the university level, so as to guarantee the future expansion of the program. Thus, as spin-offs of this competition, we created an e-learning course and also started a debate class for English majors that could be extended into the teacher-training program in general.

## **2) Debate and Innovation: an E-learning Course**

In 2018, as part of the EFOP 3.6.1. project, with my colleague Zsuzsanna Lénárt-Muszka, we put together an e-learning course in Hungarian titled "Vita és innováció: Bevezetés a vitamódszer használatába a tanórán és azon

kívül” [Debate and Innovation: An Introduction to the Use of Debating In and Outside the Classroom”]. In a separate article (titled “Fostering Innovation through Debating in the Classroom: Lessons from the Development of an E-learning Course for Secondary School Teachers in Hungary”) devoted to this material, Lénárt-Muszka introduces this course in detail, here I would only like to highlight some of its key features and the main considerations behind its creation.

The most important objective of the course (that will be available in the Moodle system) is to introduce the debate method in a way that may be used by both those who already have experience with this tool and those who are absolute beginners. It offers a practical guide that may be used to improve the skills introduced in detail above. Our aim is to help the popularization of the use of the debate method in Hungary by providing a step-by-step approach for high school teachers. By completing the course, the teachers will be able to either integrate this tool into their daily practice and classes or establish and maintain long-term programs in their schools.

The methods and tools introduced may be adapted to several classes and contexts: they may be used for teaching foreign languages, social issues, ethics, business, history, etc. The contents of the course may be used in a variety of ways: they may be seen as resources for the discussion of specific topics related to the class, they can be used to organize extra-curricular activities, and even to prepare teams for debate competitions or to organize such events. Any of the approaches may contribute to the development of the above-mentioned competences and thus provide practical assistance for teachers.

Although the course is primarily written for teachers who have less or no experience with this method, due to the structure and diverse contents of the material even those may find new information and tools who are already using debates actively. The course starts from the basics when it introduces the method, the most important debate formats, etc. and then moves on towards the more complex exercises and topics. In line with this, we discuss the basic concepts, ideas that may be used for the introduction of the method, the structure of educational debates, as well as the steps of preparation for and evaluation of debates. Throughout the course we focus on the Karl Popper debate format, but other forms are also mentioned.

The e-learning material is not only a collection of readings but an interactive learning environment. It includes not only descriptions and methodological overviews but also thought-provoking exercises, videos, and other interactive content that helps participants reflect on their own practice and opportunities. Besides these, there is also a chance to discuss course-related issues with peers and tutors, as well as to provide feedback on the course.

The e-learning course is a significant pillar of our endeavors to popularize the use of debates in Hungarian education and as such its main aim is to provide a methodological guidebook for high school teachers that introduces the basics and use of the debate method, while it also serves as a practical course book that may be visited for ideas and inspiration. It is also linked to the other two pillars as it helps teachers prepare their students for competitions and it will also be adapted to the university level and in the future used in teacher training.

### **3) Debating America: a University Course**

Although the primary target group of our projects includes high school students and teachers, due to our institutional background, student feedback, and long-term considerations, we also decided to start a university debate course that may in a second step be expanded into a course on the debate method for the teacher-training program in general.

The development of communication and presentation skills, cooperation, participation in project work, and the promotion of students' independent research skills are top priorities in the training program of English majors as well. We have used the debate method in seminars before but two years ago we also decided to put together a course dedicated to this method specifically. The course was accredited for third-year English majors studying in the American track and was titled *Debating America*. The main objective of the course was not only to improve the above-mentioned skills further but to familiarize students with some of the most controversial topics in American culture and politics in a way that fosters student participation more than in the traditional classroom setting.

During the semester students use the Karl Popper debate format which is introduced to them in a separate session. Being a team-teaching course, different instructors have the chance to introduce their own fields of expertise in different debates and the students can also participate in more than one debate during the semester. After an introductory class, the students are required to do research on their own, organize their arguments as a team, and present them convincingly, while also being responsive to the arguments of the other side. Based on student and instructor feedback, the course is successful and in high demand, which is positive in terms of the future. Therefore, based on years of experience now and the e-learning material introduced above, we are planning to start a university course in the teacher-training program that introduces students to the concept of the debate method and provides them with the necessary theoretical and practical knowledge once they start their teaching careers. This way we would like to ensure that future generations of teachers are already familiar with this method and confident enough to use it, this way

contributing to the long-term application and popularization of debates in and outside the classroom.

## Conclusion

Debating offers a powerful tool for teachers to improve the key skills and competences of their students expected in a modern society. It helps, among many other things, to improve their oral communication skills, their research and independent learning abilities, critical thinking, collaboration, etc. These are skills that are increasingly demanded at the workplace but also in society in general.

The introduction and use of the debate method, however, requires investment from the teachers as well. They need to first become familiar with the benefits of the method and experience these in practice. They need to learn the basics of debating, the organization and assessment of debates and how they can react to the challenges of this tool before fully engaging in its use. We have started various projects that serve exactly this purpose: the competition raises the attention of students and teachers and motivates them to start using the debate method. The e-learning material provides the much needed assistance with preparation both for in-class use of debates and maybe even competitions, while the planned university courses are aimed at introducing this valuable method to future teachers. Thus we try to help in this process by making the teaching of the debate method a part of teacher-training at the university level, provide support for high schools in Hungary through the debate competition and the e-learning material and thus contribute to the popularization of debating in and outside the classroom.

## References

- Bárdossy, I.: *A kritikai gondolkodás fejlesztése. Az interaktív és a reflektív tanulás lehetőségei*. Pécs: PTE, 2009.
- Brown, N.A.: Argumentation and Debate in Foreign Language Instruction: A Case for the Traditional Classroom Facilitating Advanced-Level Language Uptake. *Modern Language Journal* 4.4 (2009), 534-549.
- Clark, A.: Why debating still matters. *The Guardian*, August 6, 2016.
- Conway, W.D.: Debate in the TESL Classroom. *TESOL Quarterly* 10.3 (1976), 305–308.

- Galambos R. et al. (eds.): *Dilemma, Disputa, Demokrácia. Kézikönyv a vitakultúra fejlesztéséhez*. Budapest: Demokratikus Ifjúságért Alapítvány, 2010.
- Hall, D.: Debate: Innovative Teaching to Enhance Critical Thinking and Communication Skills in Healthcare Professionals. *The Internet Journal of Allied Health Sciences and Practice* 9.3 (2011), 1-8.
- Handayani, R.: Students' Critical Thinking Skills in a Classroom Debate. *LLT Journal: A Journal on Language and Language Teaching* 2.2 (2016), 132-140.
- Hofkins, D.: Speak Up at the Back. *The Guardian*, April 28, 2009.
- Hooley, D.: Speaking My Mind: The Importance of High School Debate. *The English Journal* 96.5 (2007), 18–19.
- Hunya, M.: *A disputa program*. Budapest: Soros Alapítvány, 1998.
- Hunya, M.: A vitakultúra és a magyar oktatás I. *Új Pedagógiai Szemle* 52.9 (2002), 114–128.
- Hunya, M.: A vitakultúra és a magyar oktatás II. *Új Pedagógiai Szemle* 52.10 (2002), 78-90.
- Jackson, M.: Debate: A Neglected Teaching Tool. *Peabody Journal of Education* 50.2 (1973), 150–154.
- Kennedy, R.: In-Class Debates: Fertile Ground for Active Learning and the Cultivation of Critical Thinking and Oral Communication Skills. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* 19.2 (2007), 183-190.
- Rybold, G.: *Speaking, Listening and Understanding: Debate for Non-Native English Speakers*. New York: International Debate Education Association, 6.
- Szivák J.: *A vita – A vitakultúra fejlesztése – Szociális kompetenciák fejlesztése a vita segítségével*. Budapest.: Gondolat Kiadó, 2010.
- Takács V. (ed.): *Dilemma, disputa, demokrácia: Kézikönyv a vitakultúra fejlesztéséhez*. Budapest: Demokratikus Ifjúságért Alapítvány, 2014.
- Trapp, R. & Driscoll W.J.: *Discovering the World Through Debate: A Practical Guide to Educational Debate for Debaters*. New York: IDEA Press, 2005.