

## *Classroom Debate to Enhance Critical Thinking Skills*

### **Débat en classe pour améliorer les compétences de pensée critique**

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#### **Abstract:**

*Critical thinking is seen by many scholars and educationalists as the common denominator of success. It helps students to develop effective thinking habits of mind. Thus, it becomes a desirable objective. To reach it, teachers today use different methods in classes. The current work examines the efficacy of developing critical thinking skills through debating about literature. In EFL teaching, students are not expected to initially understand what to aim for, they need to be guided. Thus, they can be taught to link what questions to how questions. Moreover, developing a critical ability of mind entails developing students' awareness of mental processes, which allow them to rethink their own ideas and perceptions. In this research paper, we intend to explore the importance of critical thinking for students and the effects of class debating as a tool in enhancing the students' critical thinking skills. To answer our research main question of whether classroom debate can enhance critical thinking and due to the actual circumstances of the Covid19, a survey was conducted based on merely a descriptive method. Our findings demonstrate that the class debate method helps students think in a more logical way and makes them easily perceive issues and data from different perspectives. Finally, it is revealed that class debating while teaching literature or civilization is crucial to help students use and develop their critical thinking skills.*

**Keywords:** *Critical thinking, class debate, debating, habit of mind, logical way, rethink, teaching literature*

## **Introduction**

The most common role of any teacher is to transmit new knowledge to his students; however, educationalists see that transmitting knowledge should not be an end by itself. Teachers are recommended to help their students develop some cognitive skills that would enable them reflect and analyze data before accepting it. In other words, we can say that the teacher's main objective is to help students be more independent learners and critical thinkers. To reach this objective, he uses different strategies and techniques; the most followed is the in-class debate. Debating can be one of the most convenient techniques that enables students analyze, rationalize and draw conclusions in a more logical way. It is a strategy that can potentially foster students' critical thinking skills.

## **1. Previous Studies**

According to Lai (2011) critical thinking skill gives the learner the ability to think in a clear and rational way, to analyze facts and information; it also permits him making inferences through inductive and deductive reasoning and being able to solve problems. When teachers adopt critical thinking approach in the classroom will yield benefits more important than academic success, especially when students are asked to analyze their decision making in an ethical way. Mbato (2019) advocated critical thinking instruction; according to him, critical thinking has the added benefit of fostering engagement in the public interest rather than just self-interest. It helps young people become significant forces for change (p.339). A classroom environment centered on a critical thinking approach would make students ready for the adult world of change and uncertainty. According to Paul and Elder (2020), human thinking tends to be biased unclear and flawed without concerted intervention and assessment. Moreover, according to an article in the Journal of English and Education,

critical thinking should be taught directly and explicitly. Three main approaches were suggested to foster critical thinking in the classroom. Stenberg (1987) proposed the first approach which is the general one. In this approach, critical thinking is taught with separation with the subject matter in-hand. In other words, critical thinking, in this approach, is taught separately. However, Schneider (2002) claimed that critical thinking should not be taught separately, but instead it is supposed to be taught in relation to a given context. This approach is called the infusion approach. Yet, the last approach is called the mixed approach, in which the previously mentioned approaches are used. The general approach is used in teaching basic principles of a particular subject, while at the same time the infusion approach is used when students study a specific subject. Another technique to foster critical thinking is Paul and Elder's critical questioning. Following this technique, the teacher should ask critical questions to students with the purpose of integrating the critical sense in their personalities which ultimately make them reason better. Furthermore, Bloom's critical cue is also a technique used in fostering critical thinking. It is based on Bloom's taxonomy. It follows the following steps respectively: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. According to Knapp and Watkins (2006), the argumentative essay which shows students' persuasive abilities following reasoning and evaluation, is one of the techniques to foster critical thinking. According to Meyers and Jones (1993), debate is one of the most effective techniques in fostering critical thinking in the classroom, as it is an active learning strategy, which allows students to be active learners. Similarly, Bonwell and Eison believe that debate permits students to "learn more effectively by actively analyzing,

discussing, and applying content in meaningful ways rather than passively absorbing information". Kennedy (2007) provided some techniques of in-class debates. The first one is called Four Corners, in which students are allowed to move in the classroom in order to discuss the content of the lesson. The students choose a statement and move accordingly to a corner in the classroom to represent and defend a position. If the students change their position, they can change their corner. Then, the students are expected to write a paragraph illustrating the arguments to defend their position. The second technique is called Think-Pair-Share-Square. This is a good way to introduce students to debate

and its needed skills. It begins with students working individually and makes notes about a particular matter. Then, students work in pairs by gathering their notes and then choosing one side to support. After that, students work in groups of four to develop arguments supporting one side.

The Previously mentioned definitions and approaches attempted to identify the different techniques of fostering critical thinking in classrooms as well as some techniques of in-class debate. However, these definitions do not deal with the importance of in-class debates in enhancing students' critical thinking skills. Thus, this research aims to study the crucial role of debate in enhancing critical thinking in civilization classes.

## **2. Fostering Critical Thinking Skills**

Scholars have given different definitions to critical thinking but most of them agree on its general features, processes and most importantly its great importance in all aspects of life. According to Lai critical thinking skill gives the learner the ability to think in a clear and rational way, to analyze facts and information; it also permits him making inferences through inductive and deductive reasoning and being able to solve problems (Lai, 2011). He added that critical thinking is a cognitive skill which emerges at a very early age and becomes a habit of mind. It is a very important skill which should be applied to all aspects of learning . They think that students should be critical because learning is not a question of accumulating information but rather the ability to make reasonable judgments and express opinions based on logic. Paul an Elder claimed that: "Critical thinking is the art of analyzing and evaluating thinking in view of improving it." (2020) We conclude from all these definitions mentioned that critical thinking is a cognitive and academic skill which helps the learners to think, analyze, make logical connection between things and most importantly enables him to solve problems.

Before putting critical thinking into use, one needs to be fully aware of the different techniques and skills needed to apply critical thinking effectively. Therefore, critical thinking skills must be developed. Critical thinking is heavily related to reasoning. According to (Cottrel, 2005) , reasoning primarily includes the analysis of data with the purpose of supporting a claim or argument. Simple reasoning is used during our daily lives. However, Cottrell argues that in academic environments, skills such as using reasons in order to back up an already established result, providing a claim correctly, apply logical order and making use of a correct language are to be used.

There are several skills and attitudes that are directly or indirectly associated with critical thinking. A critical thinker should be both accurate and precise, according to (Cottrel, 2005). There should be an attention to details skill. In other words, a critical thinker needs to be able to scope the small details, which are related to the general subject being discussed. Also, a critical thinker is ought to be capable to recognize the used patterns in dealing with a particular subject. This will help the critical thinker to facilitate the whole process. Furthermore, a critical thinker needs to recheck the work to assure that there are no gaps. Another important aspect is objectivity. The critical thinker must put aside his beliefs, likes and interests in order to extract correct and precise conclusions. Objectivity is reached through analyzing works from different perspectives and views. In addition, one needs to be fully aware of the consequences of his/her work, for the effects might be less preferable in the future

According to Cottrel (2005) , knowledge and research play a significant role in critical thinking. As it is easy to shed light on weak claims for good critical thinkers, it is better to cover a certain subject in order to reach better conclusions as well as criticizing the arguments more properly. Academically speaking, emotions are better to be hidden. Sometimes, if an argument, which does not fit our beliefs, is presented to us, emotions such anger may appear. Therefore, if one can resist those emotions, the argument presented will sound more logical and convincing. That is why controlling emotions in an important and valuable skill in critical thinking. As a matter of fact, excellent critical thinkers are more self-aware than others. This is generally manifested in questioning their perspectives and consequently their whole belief system.

Fostering critical thinking skills may take time. The result of developing these skills are the ability to make efficient and accurate conclusions, detecting flaws in others' reasoning, acting effectively with less information and having the ability to convince and persuade others (Cottrel, 2005). Further, Cazier, 2010 suggested some techniques that may foster critical thinking. According to Cazier, reading is helpful to develop critical thinking, as it allows students to be exposed to new ideas as well as expanding their knowledge in different areas. Additionally, questioning from the part of students is essential to reach an advanced level in critical thinking. Actually, the fact of questioning is a sign that the process of critical thinking is taking place. Moreover, questioning from the part of the teacher, while at the same time noticing the responses of the students is an effective way to discover whether the process is happening or not, for asking questions to students force them to think. Furthermore, asking students to write essays, especially argumentative ones. It allows students to use reasoning, which is essential in critical thinking, in constructing their argument. Besides, students, in this case, need to be convincing. All these elements are significant in the process of critical thinking. Discussions and debates also play a pivotal in developing and fostering critical thinking skills. Discussions give students to present their own ideas as well as being exposed to different perspectives, which they have to analyze and evaluate. Debates allow students to defy received knowledge. Debates also give students the responsibility of self- learning in order to present their information. Often, after debates, there are discussions. These discussions reflect the outcomes of the debate. Critical thinking is an important element in students' lives. Students as well as teachers should work I order to foster and develop CT skills and techniques, for they are essential not only in the academic environment, but also in everyday situations. There are several ways by which one can foster critical thinking.

### **3. Debates in an Academic Environment**

Debate is a process involving formal discussion of a given subject. Different reasons for opposing views are brought forward in a debate. Debate takes place in public forums, research schools, and legislative assemblies. In addition to the participants of the debate, this is a formal method of conversation, typically with a moderator and an audience. Logical clarity, factual accuracy and some degree of emotional appeal to the viewer are elements in the debate where, by providing a superior "context" or explanation of the topic, one side frequently prevails over the other group. There are guidelines for participants to address and agree on disagreements in a formal debate contest, within a structure that determines how they should do so. Debates are held in chambers and assemblies of different kinds to address issues and make decisions on measures to be taken, often by voting. Deliberative bodies such as parliaments, legislative councils and meetings of all sorts participate in debates. For democratic democracies for particular a legislature is discussing and agreeing on new legislation. In democracies, formal debates are often held between candidates for public office, such as the debates on leaders. Debates are often held for educational and recreational purposes and are typically connected to educational institutions and debating societies. Informal and forum discussion is fairly popular, seen on television shows like the Australian talk show, Q&A. [depending on whom? ] The result of a contest can be determined by a vote of the jury, by a judge or by a combination of both.

Debates may be included in the teaching framework for academics (Oros, 2007) . Debates also can be incorporated into the design and evaluation of courses and presented to the students from the start of a class. They should be used to supplement other teaching methods for these academics, and offer a range of teaching types to keep students actively interested in content. As Jackson,( 2009) said, "debate is not intended to be an end in itself, but rather a means to desirable educational outcomes that complement other teaching techniques and student experience.

(Bonwell & Eison, 1991) in (Kennedy, 2007) believed this form of active involvement makes it possible for students to "...learn more effectively by actively analysing, discussing, and applying

content in meaningful ways rather than by passively absorbing information”. In contrast, the use of debates is seen by Walker & Warhust( 2002) as a tactic going beyond student participation. Debates require lecturers to stand back from delivering taught content and provide the space for students to educate each other. However, Zare & Othman, (2013) stated that the content of the debate depended on whether problems were straightforward and did not support one side of the argument. Through debates, they believed that students are learning essential skills such as reasoning, analysis, and presenting arguments. Moreover, classroom experiences between students and lecturers should be more effective than conventional teaching strategies. This form of interaction is “underpinned by values of collaboration, and the construction of individual and collective knowledge between teacher and student, and student and student in a culture of educational conversation.” (Walker & Warhust, 2002). This form of collaborative learning through dialogue can encourage active learning and high-order thinking amongst students .

For Oros (2007) debating is ultimately related to interpersonal social skills and critical thinking. In a debate system , the process of voicing thoughts and different 'for and against' perspectives promotes interaction among peers .

#### **4. Critical Thinking in Classroom Debates**

Jackson,( 2009) stressed the need for lecturers to pursue opportunities for students to improve their critical thinking and problem-solving abilities, as well as communication skills in teaching sessions. The use of debates helps students to improve their awareness of social issues, consider different points of view and acknowledge that there may be varying viewpoints on any subject area as individuals. Most importantly, students need to engage in research to develop their understanding of evidence in the debates that is aligned with either the for or the opposite perspective. Jackson (2009) stated “...topics or questions for debates are by their nature without right or wrong answering”. Using debates provides students with an opportunity to present alternative approaches to a particular topic of discussion, rather than trying to find a suitable. In addition to this, detail Students may improve their skills in investigating debates outside of the lecture, before they are taken to the session. We conclude that students should actively participate in independent study and gather information from various viewpoints, interpret this information in relation to the topic of discussion and prepare an appropriate case for discussion during the session. As a matter of facts, students are able to effectively participate in independent study and gather information from various viewpoints, evaluate this information by analyzing it in relation to the subject of discussion and prepare an effective argument for discussion in session.

#### **5. The Benefits of Debate**

##### **5.1 Rigorous and Critical Thinking**

The ability to think rigorously and objectively is perhaps the most valuable skill debaters to learn. A variety of studies have indicated that engaging in debate increases students ' critical thinking about debate. Participation in the debate encourages problem solving and creative thinking, and helps students create links between words and ideas that make concepts meaningful

Debate students are taught to synthesize vast bodies of complex knowledge, and to practice imagination and to incorporate different ways of learning. Training to think well has far-reaching impact upon every aspect of the life of a student.



## **5.2 Mental and Emotional Maturity**

Debate includes research involving serious subject matter in a mature and competent environment. Debate students show more maturity in the face of challenges and continue to build deeper peer and tutor relationships than the average student. Debate helps students to understand how others think, which strengthens their capacity to communicate and dispute resolution. This makes discussion one of the most effective mechanisms to provide At-risk students with affective education. Overall, debate increases the trust of students in themselves by encouraging them to learn the skills required to become responsible adults.

## **5.3 Academic skills**

As a result of engaging in competitive debate, several studies demonstrate marked progress in a wide range of academic skills. Students at the debate excel in writing and oral communication, and greatly enhance their knowledge of reading. Students get acquainted with a new idea and foreign vocabulary and access a broad variety of new knowledge such as theory at the college level, history, public policy and current affairs. Most significantly perhaps debaters are self-directed learners, enabling them to take charge of their educational experience and to continue learning throughout their lives. This makes competitive discourse especially affective platform for gifted and talented education. A variety of studies indicate marked improvement across a wide range of academic skills as the result of participating across competitive discourse.

## **6. Critical Thinking Strategies**

Many scholars and experts in the field have attempted to summarize the strategies of critical thinking; therefore, many opinions and points of views have been published about the matter.

According to Potts (1994), there are several strategies to teach critical thinking. First, interactions between students while learning help them to accomplish more individually. Additionally, asking open-ended questions, which have no right answer, helps students to be creative and no afraid of giving wrong answers. Furthermore, giving enough time for students to think and reflect on questions helps them to understand, and therefore generate accurate answers. Finally, teachers should give students the opportunity to see how new acquired skills can be used in other areas (1995, p. 1). In civilization classes, this can be easily applied by teachers. Supposedly, the topic discussed is the role of the media in the United States. Most probably, students will have opposing arguments, and consequently, opposing idea. This allows them to generate several answers leading to several points of views. As a result, each student acquires knowledge, while presenting some either.

According to Alfred C. Snider, debate is a critical advocacy, where the student has to advise, suggest, and defend arguments. Students also have to use critical thinking to evaluate others' arguments and ideas. This way, students become more aware and knowledgeable about the discussed matter, knowing their stance and others' stance either. Additionally, students will have the ability to articulate their ideas with confidence, while also paying much attention to opposing ideas in order to answer properly. To achieve all of that, students must examine the relevance and the quality of the information. Then, students have to use the information to fulfill a purpose. This makes students better critical thinkers and communicators.

Debate increases critical thinking, creativity, and academic performance. A study showed that debate significantly increased students' academic performances. In addition, after engaging in debate activities, students become more capable of solving problems with the use of communication. Moreover, the level of creativity of students increased, as they were able to produce new ideas and arguments.

According to Seiger, (1985), students are given specific rules for classifying knowledge and are asked to memorize them. The Creating Categories technique is an inductive reasoning tool that helps students categorize knowledge by discovering the laws instead of simply memorizing them. Such active learning usually leads to a greater understanding and retention of the concepts and related content than a more directed teaching approach is possible.

Keefe & Walberg (1992) noted that a physical and intellectual environment which encourages a spirit of exploration facilitates critical thinking in classroom. Two recommendations can be given concerning the physical layout of the classroom. First, if seating is configured in such a way that students share the "floor" with the teacher and that all can see and communicate with each other, this helps to reduce the passive, reactive mode that many students adopt when all face teacher. Secondly, visual aids in the classroom can promote continued exposure to critical thinking processes. In literature classes, and in order to use critical thinking effectively, all students must be involved in the process. Plus, visual aids related to the topic discussed may help students focus on the process. Erstad (2018) noted that there are six critical thinking strategies that students should acquire. He further provides information on how to improve them.

### **6.1 Identification**

Erstad (2018) assured that the first step in the process of critical thinking is to recognize the situation or problem as well as the factors which they affect it. When you have a good view of the situation and the individuals, groups or variables that could be affected, you can then start digging deeper into a problem and its possible solutions. This skill is improved by asking the following questions:

- Who does what?
- What does the explanation for that seem to be?
- What are the outcomes, and how do they change?

### **6.2 Research**

Independent research skill is important when contrasting claims about a matter. Arguments are intended to be persuasive — that is, the facts and figures presented in their favor, in background, may be missing or from dubious sources. The best way to overcome this is by independent verification; identifying and analyzing the source of the facts. This is improved by spotting statements which do not have sources. If there is no straightforward answer, this means that the source may not be totally true. Additionally, the difference between common and academic papers should be known (Erstad, 2018).

### **6.3 Identifying Biases**

This ability can be incredibly difficult, since even the most educated of us will struggle to identify prejudices. Strong critical thinkers do their best to critically analyze the facts. Think of yourself as a judge in that you want to assess both sides of arguments, but you'll also need to bear in mind the prejudices that each side may have. It's equally important, and sometimes harder, to learn how to put aside your own personal prejudices that can cloud your decision. This is improved by asking the following questions:

- Who does this benefit?

- Does the source of this information appear to have an agenda?
- Is the source overlooking, ignoring or leaving out information that doesn't support its beliefs or claims?
- Is this source using unnecessary language to sway an audience's perception of a fact? (Erstad, 2018).

#### **6.4 Inferences**

Another valuable skill to practice logical thinking is the ability to interpret and draw conclusions based on the knowledge that is given to you. Material does not always come with a paragraph describing what it means. Frequently you will need to review the information provided and draw conclusions based on raw data. The integrability helps you to extrapolate and discover possible consequences when analyzing a scenario. Also it is important to remember that not all inferences are right. This is improved by trying to collect enough data and information before making definite conclusions (Erstad, 2018).

#### **6.5 Determining Relevance**

Another skill is determining relevance. During a difficult scenario, one of the most challenging aspects of analytical thought is to find out what knowledge is most important. In certain cases, details that might seem significant will be introduced to you, but it may turn out to be only a minor point of data to consider. This is improved by setting a clear objective whether it is finding a solution or identifying something. Knowing the objective will help to figure out what the relevant knowledge is. However, even with a specific target, it can still be difficult to decide which knowledge really is important. One technique to counter this is to draw up a graphical list of graded data points in order of importance. If you sort it out this way, you'll probably end up with a list that contains a lot of clearly important pieces of information at the top of your page, as well as a few points at the bottom that you're likely to miss. From there, for further review, you can narrow your emphasis on the less defined topics that exist in the center of your list (Erstad, 2018).

#### **6.6 Curiosity**

When faced with a situation that needs critical thought, it's extremely tempting to sit back and take anything presented to you at face value, but it can also be a catastrophe formula. This can be improved by training one's self to nurture the curiosity. In other words, asking open-ended questions followed by follow-up questions (Erstad, 2018).

All of these strategies can be implemented in civilization classes. They allow students to examine, evaluate, and analyze information carefully with the purpose of providing accurate arguments that support their claims and answers.

### **7. The Role of Debate in Enhancing Critical Thinking**

Debate, according to many researchers, is a crucial tool in order to develop students' critical thinking skills, and consequently, their analytical abilities. Austin & David (2013) identify six important skills that debate develops.



## **7.1 Argumentation**

Debate provides Argumentation Instruction. Argumentation teachers have regarded argument in this discipline from classical times to the present, as the best form of providing instruction. Debate provides students an excellent opportunity to apply the theories of argumentation under conditions designed to improve their knowledge and comprehension of these theories, as well as their usage skills. As an instructional approach debate offers excellent incentive for learning, because students have both the short-term aim of winning a tournament decision or prize and the long-term goal of strengthening their technical advantage and developing their skills. This mixture of short-term and long-term motives makes an ideal learning situation possible. The continuous monitoring of student achievement with immediate input and judge-debate assessments provides regular opportunities to promote development and improvement and detect and resolve misunderstandings (Austin & David , 2013, p. 29).

## **7.2 Understanding Contemporary Issues**

Debate allows for study and extensive review of important contemporary issues. Thoughtful educators have long worried that students and the general public still only have a limited awareness of important contemporary issues. In addition to gaining knowledge of the concepts of argumentation, debaters will have an opportunity to examine and analyze the major contemporary issues and related literature that form the basis of the proposals under discussion. Students should develop a better-than - average knowledge of current problems during a discussion career, as well as skill in applying methods that will allow them to evaluate the problems critically. As one expert points out, the true intent of rhetoric — the energizing of knowledge — is associated with investigation and policy.

## **7.3 Developing Critical Thinking**

Debate Builds Critical Thinking Career. Students engage in an instructional framework expressly designed to improve their critical reasoning skills through the study of argumentation and participation in the debate. A variety of studies have studied whether or not college courses enhance critical thought in argumentation and debate. One researcher, Kent R. Colbert, found that the debaters substantially outscored the none debaters on critical thinking assessments after having participated in debates. 10 Debaters learn to apply the concepts of critical thinking not only to the problems that occur in the relative comfort of study or briefing, but also to the problems that emerge in the heat of discussion (Austin & David , 2013, p. 30).

## **7.4 Fostering Better Judgment**

Debate fosters responsible judgment. Scholars warn us that a propensity to see complicated things in black and white terms results in many problems in human relations. From several points of view, educational discussion offers students an opportunity to discuss serious issues. When debaters evaluate the positive and negative possible situations, they begin to understand the scope of most contemporary issues and recognize the importance of a multivalued orientation. When they debate both sides of a proposition, they understand not only that most contemporary topics have more than one side, but also that a vast set of principles embodies only one side of a proposition. Often at the beginning of an academic year, some debaters may believe that only one side of a proposal is "correct" on the basis of a quickly formed opinion. But, after a few debates, they typically request an

assignment on the other side of the proposition. By the end of the year (or semester), after having argued on all sides of the argument, they understand the importance of withholding judgment until a sufficient amount of proof has been gathered and analyzed. Furthermore, the need to defend one side of the argument in a discussion shows them that decisions cannot be delayed forever. It may or may not be the same as at the beginning of the year when they actually articulate their personal stance on the proposition. But now, after careful thought, it'll be a position they have entered, one they can justify logically (Austin & David, 2013, p. 34).

### **7.5 Enhancing Speech**

Debate promotes composition and delivery of meaningful words, since the composition and execution of the debate speech are among the factors deciding the efficacy of the arguments, debaters need to pick, organize and present their materials in accordance with the best standards of public expression. Debate places a premium on extemporaneous delivery which requires speakers to think on their feet. A single judge in the preliminary round of a competition, a group of business people in a community club, or a radio or television audience may usually talk to several different audiences. Any one of these circumstances poses new challenges. Constant adaptation to the audience and the condition of expression allows the debaters to develop flexibility and facilities to think and talk. Public-speaking nervousness is one of the most common issues for students and professionals. It can act as a true and important obstacle to successful communication and ultimately to academic and professional success. Debate is an ideal forum for students to build coping strategies that allow them to age their anxiety about speech. Since debate requires extensive training and allows for it, students gain faith in their materials and enthusiasm for advocacy. Debate offers a focus on the material over style, so the emphasis is on the points, not the individual. Student debaters can forget to be anxious, because they have to think about so much more. And repetition of experience helps the students develop trust and learn how to deal with their unavoidable nervousness in a way that prevents them from impeding their goals (Austin & David , 2013, p. 35).

### **7.6 Problems-Solving Skills**

Debate Builds skills to solve problems. Policy discourse involves participants to analyze and examine significant social issues, and to apply approaches to those issues creatively and critically. Experience suggests that these skills help debaters to systematically analyze situations and to find suitable solutions by using reasoned calculation and creativity. Research also indicates that preparation for debate allows individuals to find solutions to their own problems and, in particular, encourages non- violent conflict resolution. The National Debate Project shows violence is minimized by discussion. Essential new analysis shows that there is a major association between improved communication skills associated with engaging in discourse and reduced physical aggression in peer and household relationships (Austin & David , 2013).

## **8 Debate Process**

There are many types of debate that students and teachers can apply in the classroom. Each debate has a specific process that students have to abide to. Almost all debates have the same role, which is reaching solutions to articular problems.

## **8.4 Debate Formats**

Debate takes different formats depending on their types. Some debates can be used in an academic environment, and some are not quite suitable for academic atmosphere.

### **8.4.1 Karl Popper Debate**

The Karl-Popper model focuses on specific and sometimes highly controversial ideas, demonstrating the development of critical thinking skills and appreciation for different points of view. Debaters work together in teams of three, and each problem needs to be investigated on both sides. Each team has the chance to raise arguments and answer questions to the opposing team. Judges then provide critical suggestions,

Comment on logical inconsistencies, inadequate proof or points that may have been ignored by the debaters. The distinguishing features of the format are: cross- examination, when four of the six debaters ask their opponents questions; and preparation time, when debaters can prepare before their speeches. This format emphasizes team work and is a good format for beginner debaters, because each speaker in this debate speaks once only and members of the team need to communicate with each other during the designated preparation time (International Debate Education Association, 2012)

### **8.4.2 Lincoln-Douglas Debate**

The motion is a declaration in Lincoln-Douglas Debate, phrased as a sentence that reflects on a topic of philosophical or political interest and that will be examined from a moral viewpoint. Lincoln-Douglas Debate places primacy on debaters' ability to make original, coherent, and philosophically compelling points regarding ethical issues. Debaters should bring out a compelling moral stance which they can protect against criticism and use to contend against an opposing argument, without slipping into self- contradiction or ignoring the importance of the issues at stake. Students should become acquainted with the work of major ethical philosophers and should include real-world examples and interpretation to guide their cases (International Debate Education Association, 2012).

### **8.4.3 Cross-Examination (Policy) Debate**

Cross-Examination Debate, like other forms of discussion, focuses on the central elements of a contentious topic. Cross-examination Debate improves essential skills such as abilities for analytical thinking, listening, case building, analysis, note-taking

and advocacy. Cross-examination Debate is distinct from other types (except for two Parliamentary Debate teams) in the use of a two-person team, along with an emphasis on cross-examination of substantive speeches. Although particular practices vary, Cross Examination Debate usually encourages extensive use of facts and focuses more on substance than (International Debate Education Association, 2012).

#### 8.4.4 British Parliamentary Debate

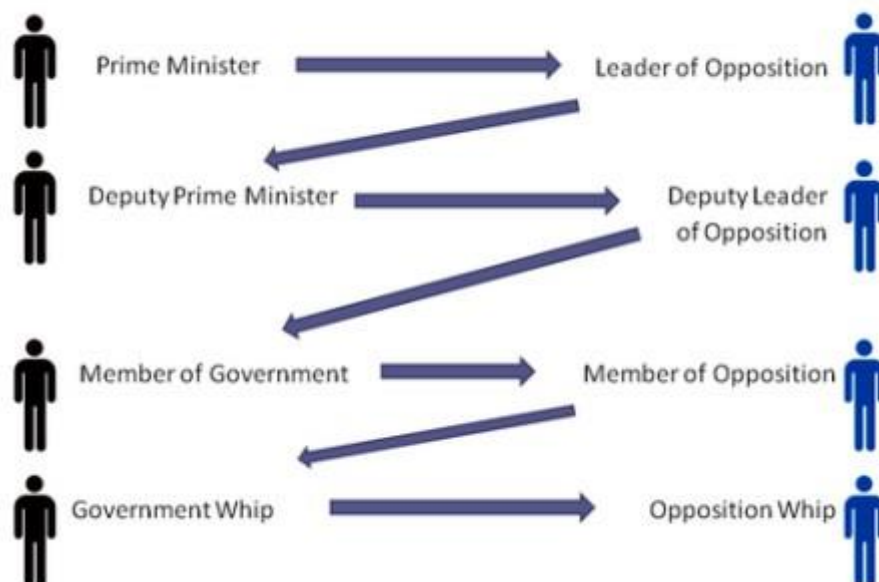
This is the name of the format used for the World Universities Debating Championship and has, as a result, become the default format for many university societies, especially in the English-speaking world. It is probably the most commonly used format in the world. In much the same way as many university societies debate in their native language as well as English, so they tend to use a regional or local format and also BP. This format comprises eight speakers: four speaking in favor of a motion and four against. Each side is made up of two teams of two individuals. They are discussing a motion (the proposal that should be discussed) usually framed with the language This House believes ... OR Would this House ... The government

should suggest a course of action in BP as a means of legislative discussion, and support it with political, realistic and substantive arguments. The burden of proof rests on the government, but the opposition must also prove the strength of their arguments. In BP, a motion is typically announced 15 minutes before the debate begins. Speeches are seven minutes long. The first proposer is required to present a motion description which places an idea in a real-world setting. If a motion has been established, it demands that all speakers discuss the concept, not some other version that may be simpler for them (International Debate Education Association, 2012).

#### 8.5 Applying Debate in Class

For the purpose of this study, the British Parliamentary Debate has been chosen to give a brief example. This is how the British Parliamentary debate looks like:

### Roles of Speakers



**Figure 01: British Parliamentary Debate Shape.** (Jasper, 2011)

As it appears, the British Parliamentary Debate composes of two teams. The proposition and the opposition. The following table shows the responsibilities of members in the two teams

Speaker	Speaker Responsibilities
Prime Minister 1 <sup>st</sup> speaker for 1 <sup>st</sup> proposition:	-Defines and interprets the motion; -Develops the case for the proposition.
Leader of Opposition 1 <sup>st</sup> speaker for 1 <sup>st</sup> opposition:	-Accepts the definition of the motion; -Refutes the case of the 1 <sup>st</sup> proposition; -Constructs one or more arguments against the Prime Minister's interpretation of the motion.
Deputy Prime Minister 2 <sup>nd</sup> speaker for 1 <sup>st</sup> proposition:	-Refutes the case of the 1 <sup>st</sup> opposition; -Rebuilds the case of the 1 <sup>st</sup> proposition; -May add new arguments to the case of the 1 <sup>st</sup> proposition.
Deputy Leader of Opposition 2 <sup>nd</sup> speaker for 1 <sup>st</sup> opposition:	-Continues refutation of case of 1 <sup>st</sup> proposition; -Rebuilds arguments of the 1 <sup>st</sup> opposition; -May add new arguments to the case of the 1 <sup>st</sup> opposition.



Member of Government  1 <sup>st</sup> speaker for 2 <sup>nd</sup> proposition:	-Defends the general direction and case of the 1 <sup>st</sup> proposition; -Continues refutation of 1 <sup>st</sup> opposition team;  -Develops a new argument that is different from but consistent with the case of the 1 <sup>st</sup> proposition (sometimes called an extension).
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Member of Opposition  1 <sup>st</sup> speaker for 2 <sup>nd</sup> opposition:	-Defends the general direction taken by the 1 <sup>st</sup> opposition; -Continues general refutation of 1 <sup>st</sup> proposition case;  -Provides more specific refutation of 2 <sup>nd</sup> opposition;  -Provides new opposition arguments.
Government Whip  2nd speaker for 2nd proposition:	-Summarizes the entire debate from the point of view of the proposition, defending the general view point of both proposition teams with a special eye toward the case of the 2nd proposition; -Does not provide new arguments.

Opposition Whip  2nd speaker for 2nd opposition:	-Summarizes the entire debate from the point of view of the opposition, defending the general view point of both opposition teams with a special eye toward the case of the 2nd opposition; -Does not provide new arguments.
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**Table 1 :Speaker Responsibilities for British Parliamentary Debate.**

The Parliamentary Debate allows students to improve almost all the previously mentioned critical thinking skills and strategies. In a civilization class, the question “Are the actions of the United States towards the Middle East benevolent?” This question can be discussed by students by applying the British Parliamentary Debate. This way, students from both teams provide arguments supporting their stance. At the end, both teams will reach to some sort of a conclusion about the discussed topic.

### **Conclusion**

Critical thinking is a broad subject to be discussed. It encompasses many areas, skills, techniques, and approaches. It is; however, achievable, especially for students. Through fully grasping critical thinking, its approaches, and its benefits, one can develop and foster this skill; and therefore achieving it. By mastering critical thinking, debating is easier to learn, for critical thinking is probably the most important factor in debate. Debating has a significant and crucial role in developing and enhancing students’ critical thinking. Through applying strategies by teachers, students have proven to show many skills related to critical thinking. The British Parliamentary Debate is one of the most used debate formats in universities, as it allows students to search, evaluate, present, and criticize data. This is what critical thinking is all about.

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