Debate Centers

Formative Assessment: Group Self-Monitoring

Debate Center

Pro	Con

ROOSEVELT UNIVERSITY
Funded by a NCLB grant from the Illinois Board of Higher Education
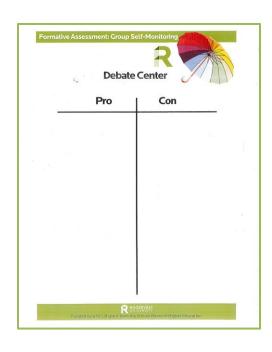
About Debate Centers:
Language and literacy centers are placed in the classroom environment in strategic locations that provide students with the ultimate space to work individually, with peers and on teams. Purposes and clear directions are always set for the centers and identified for students to see. Language and literacy centers are a necessary tenet to the balanced literacy classroom and provide ideal settings for discourse and shared talking to unfold naturally.

The debate center is one strategy in which to promote the development of argument and debate. This center can remain up all year in classrooms while changing the topic of debate on a weekly basis. Social justice can be the perfect starting point as students work on teams to develop opinions and arguments to debate. Students at centers are engaged in rigorous conversations based both on the informational text readings and their own personal experiences.

Tips for the Debate Centers:

- USE POST-ITS only
- Make sure that the students understand what a debate is
- Provide clear directions, rules and roles for the center
- Include informational text and other sources (video & more)
- Make sure that the students include the evidence from the sources to build their arguments

Resources for debates:

Debate rubrics for third grade- middle school may include scores on the following areas: addressing issue, supporting with facts, persuasiveness, teamwork, and organization. For K-2nd grades, teachers may encourage children to think critically by asking "yes" or "no" to simple questions (such as ethical/right or wrong questions) from appropriate books and discussing why they choose their answer. Source: educationworld.com, *Resources for classroom debates*.
Another great idea for all grades is to consider alternative endings to a story and the different consequences, including pros and cons. This debate activity allows students to practice reasoned decision-making, finding solutions, and considering compromise. Source: sciencenetlinks.com, *Making Good Decisions*.

ROOSEVELT UNIVERSITY