

What Do You Mean Engineering Students Can't Debate?

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Abstract

Debating is considered as an endeavor for language or humanities-related students. It is uncommon to see engineering students get involved in such an extra-curricular activity. It is known that debate is one of the highest intellectual activities that can make students challenged, motivated and fulfilled. It helps develop the learners in various aspects such as sense of leadership, teamwork, art and skills of communication, advanced thinking skills, maturity, researching skills, friendship and most importantly, the awareness of and concern on global issues. At KMUTT, debating has been promoted not only among engineering students but also to other technology-related faculties. It proves the aforementioned claim thus we are here to share our success story.

The study aims at investigating the perception of the debate workshop participants who took part in the European Union-Thailand National Debate Championships 2008. The data came from video recordings during the two workshops and two actual debating sessions. Then focus group interviews of the six participants will be conducted to provide reflections of their debating experience. The findings will be reported based on the categories that will emerge from the obtained data. The implications of the study may include the benefits of debating in terms of language and soft skills.

Introduction

In many universities in the world with liberal arts and humanities, debate has been a compulsory requirement but only to students of liberal arts and humanities such as those majoring in English, Political Science, Forensics or Law. For engineering fields, however, debating can just be an elective course as with Public Speaking but not in our university and in most universities in Thailand. Only if offered not as a requisite or an elective, therefore, but as an extra-curricular activity can engineering students learn about debating and its various benefits not only in terms of language but also in terms of critical thinking, soft skills (presentation and study skills, teamwork, etc.) and personality development.

The success and sense of fulfillment of engineering students who joined a national competition led us to research about the benefits of debating. We want to prove that any highly

motivated students of any field of specialization such as engineering or students in any technical-related field can also debate. “Students who are disengaged in a traditional classroom setting gravitate to debate. The excitement of debate tournaments ignites their intellectual curiosity. Once their mind catches fire, the curiosity spreads to other areas of their life”, says Betty Maddox, a former district consultant and debate coach in the United States. This excitement or curiosity has been observed in the engineering student debaters in this study. Such excitement produces various positive results in various areas of their development – cognitively, linguistically, socially and emotionally. These results will be presented in details in the findings. The conceptual framework of this study is substantiated by the following review of literature.

Literature Review

For many decades, debating has been practiced in many parts of the world and academic research has proven that it produces multiple benefits for students regardless of their age, academic level (from elementary to post-graduate), gender, race or socio-economic status. In this review, we will point out a few noteworthy research findings among the numerous benefits of debate although we will mainly focus on cognitive, linguistic, emotional and social aspects of development it contributes.

During the past two decades, the measure of success has been revolutionized by Howard Gardner’s (1983) introduction of the Theory of Multiple Intelligences and by Robert Sternberg’s (1988) Triarchic view of Intelligence. In Gardner’s theory, aside from the usual two forms of intelligence which are linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences, he added five more forms of intelligences which include what are now considered as important factors in an individual’s success – interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences. Interpersonal intelligence is the ability to understand others, how they feel, what motivates them, how they interact with one another and to relate with others effectively while intrapersonal intelligence is the ability to see oneself, to develop a sense of self-identity and to manage oneself effectively.

Debate as an activity to improve both IQ and EQ

Goleman (1995) classified interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences under emotional intelligence (EQ), the ability to acknowledge, value and manage one’s feelings so that they are expressed appropriately and effectively, laying the groundwork for meaningful relationships and productive teamwork. Goleman found that high IQ may help individuals to be employed but it is

EQ that allows them to excel on the job and advance to leadership positions. Interestingly, debate has been found to develop both IQ and EQ. As a highly cognitive activity, it develops IQ as MacBath (in Parcher, 1999) argues:

Debate is a uniquely beneficial educational tool because of the value of argumentation theory itself. The creation of an argument is one of the most complex cognitive acts that a person can engage in. Creating an argument requires the research of issues, organization of data, analysis of data, synthesization of different kinds of data, and an evaluation of information with respect to which conclusion it may point. After this process, the formulation of an argument requires the debater to consider differing methods of critiquing reason, the decision making formula, the audience and the criteria of decision making. In the end, arguments must be communicated to an audience clearly and succinctly - a difficult cognitive process requiring conversion between thought, written rhetoric and oral rhetoric. At the end, the debate itself requires the processing of other's arguments and then the reformulation and defense of one's original position (p3).

The debate training experience brings close relationship between a debate coach and debate participants, another reason for the unique educational value of debate. Scott (cited in Parcher 1999) explains that the unique attribute of debating creates an intense educational experience promoting both IQ and EQ development:

The combination of superior students, close student-teacher relationships, and high motivation all combine to...require the student to develop habits of sustained mental discipline and a commitment to excellence. Relatively few undergraduate students ever experience the intensity of intellectual concentration and production which become the common experience of the participant in debating (p3).

Parcher also presents the benefits of debating, particularly the development of inter-related skills not only in terms of IQ and EQ but also moral development and communication skills. According to Parcher (1999), debate is also a successful method of teaching because of its inherently interactive format:

This methodology describes competitive debate, both in terms of how debates are formatted and in its reliance on "coaching" as a method of instruction. Research has demonstrated that interactive formats are the preferred method for achieving critical thinking, problem solving ability, higher level cognitive learning, attitude change, moral development, and communication skill development (Gall). Of the six recommended methods for active learning, debate utilizes five, they include writing, oral presentation, small group strategies, instructional games or role playing and field study methods... (p4).

Debate as a tool for creative thinking, problem-solving and contextual skills development

Another closely and practically related concept to this study is Sternberg's (1988) proposed three types of "smartness" which include: componential ability for analytical thinking; experiential ability to engage in creative thinking, combining disparate experiences in insightful ways, and; contextual ability that enables people to "play the game" of manipulating the environment (others, situations, institutions, contexts). Sternberg, departing himself away from the traditional psychometric theory of mental speed or IQ, focused his research to tests that measure insight, real-life problem-solving, common sense, getting a wider picture of things and other practical tasks that are closely related to success in the real world. All these skills are found to be developed by debating as cited in the work of Jeffrey Parcher (1991).

Debate as soft skills and personality development and leadership training activity

Another remarkable research whose more simplified findings we will present here was conducted by the National Debate Project (NDP) in the United States to determine the effectiveness of the debate program to both high schools and middle schools. In this research, pre- and post- measures for debate participants were conducted annually for five years. While the present study uses qualitative method, non-native university students as its respondents, NDP used experimental method and high school and middle school students who are native English speakers. After five years of research on the benefits of debating, NDP came up with the following findings:

1. Improved student conduct
2. Improved Grade Point Averages (GPA)
3. Improved Reading
4. Improved Oral Communication Skills
5. Enhanced Critical Thinking Skills

6. Improved Knowledge of the Social Sciences

7. Leadership Training

Aside from the academic advancement students have gained from debating such as improved GPA and reading skills, they have also improved their soft skills. Soft skills include four sets of workplace competencies: problem-solving and other cognitive skills, oral communication skills, personal qualities and work ethic, and interpersonal and teamwork skills. NDP reported that students debate on social issues and propose solutions to such issues as UN peacekeeping, US policy toward China, etc. so it is a good practice for problem-solving. They also need to practice teamwork in trying to solve problems and in presenting their arguments as they split different issues among themselves in a team so that they will not repeat what someone has already mentioned or covered. They also improved their conduct as they learn to relate with others in the group, balance their views and respect others' opinions. NDP also mentioned famous leaders having been developed by debating. Among them are Franklin Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, Bill Clinton, Hilary Clinton and many others.

Teaching soft skills to engineers

As engineering students lack the opportunity to learn soft skills in most of their content courses, teaching soft skills explicitly is not an easy modification in the curriculum. In the study conducted by Pulko (2003) in the United Kingdom, she found out that teaching soft skills (such as presentation and professional skills, project management, report writing, study skills and teamwork) to engineering students explicitly is beneficial but attendance was a problem as not many of them were interested. Only about 50% among those who signed up for the course successfully completed the course. She, therefore, suggested that embedding soft skills to core courses can be a possibility although she believes that the soft skills culture is not yet mature enough for effective embedding. Similarly, in the International Program of Computer Engineering of KMUTT only about 30% of the total population is interested in debating

workshop annually. Usually they are the students with advanced English proficiency and high motivation to learn new things. Although debating teaches soft skills implicitly, its effectiveness has been proven by empirical studies.

Developing risk-taking skills among non-native speakers by debating

In a journal article by Krieger (2005), he quotes Nisbet (2003) who declares that “debate is an important educational tool for learning analytic thinking skills and for forcing self-conscious reflection on the validity of one’s ideas”. Krieger also mentioned that from a debate study conducted by Fukuka (2003) with Japanese students in Japan, he found out that before the debates only 30.8% of the students were not afraid of expressing their opinions but after the debates the figure rose to 56.7%. Krieger, thus concludes, that although debate is quite challenging, non-native speakers can also develop debating skills.

Motivational theories supporting the possibility of teaching debate

The nature of debate being challenging and intellectually demanding as described by Maddox ignites curiosity to debaters and increases their motivation. Among the most well-known contemporary motivation theories in psychology that support this fact are Goal setting theory by Lock and Latham (1990) and Self-determination theory by Deci and Ryan (1985) and Vallerand (1997) (both in Dörnyei, 2001a). Goal setting theory states that, “Goals that are both specific and difficult lead to the highest performance provided the individual shows goal commitment” (Dörnyei, 2001a, p. 11). Self-determination theory, on the other hand, explains that, “Intrinsic motivation concerns behavior performed for its own sake in order to experience pleasure and satisfaction such as the joy of doing a particular activity or satisfying one’s curiosity” (Dörnyei, 2001a, p. 11).

Method

Participants

The participants were six Thai undergraduates attending the King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi (KMUTT), in Thailand. Four of them belonged to Computer Engineering, the international programme, one came from the school of science, majoring in Microbiology, the other from Technical Education, majoring in Multimedia. All of the participants learned and speak English as a foreign language and Thai as their first language. All of them had high language proficiency, with their TOEFL scores above 500. They perceived to have average to great level of exposure of English.

Procedures

1. The six participants were contacted to take part in a focus group interview on their experience in the EU-TU Debate Competition they had joined. All of them agreed so the interview was scheduled.

2. Five participants could be present on the day of interview. One was abroad for his study; therefore, a teleconference communication was set up as part of the focus group. The participants were informed about the purpose of the study and the consent form was signed by each of the participants.

3. Two recorders were used for audio-recording, which took nearly 40 minutes.

4. The interview questions involved an investigation of their attitudes and opinions about debating, divided into three parts, the before-, during- and after-competition. The first phase refers to the participants' experience prior to the EU-TU Competition. The during-competition started when they joined the training workshop at the university and outside. Details of the training will be given in the next section. The after-competition started when the competition ended.

5. The recordings were transcribed and analysed by the two researchers.

The training/workshop

Once the motions of the debate were distributed by email, the six participants were asked to research on the topics declared. The debaters met twice a day in the morning and in the afternoon, to practice debating on two motions per day, for 14 days. There was one session done with video recording. After that they were put together in a hostel for total seclusion, to minimise distractions from friends and family, for five days. Three motions were practiced each day, in the morning, in the afternoon and in the evening. This took place during the 2008 school vacation, so their participation did not interfere with their studies at the University.

Method of Analysis

Keywords from the data were drawn and grouped into different categories. It was found that the categories of benefits of debating can be identified into two major aspects, skills gained (both learning skills and personal skills) and personal development.

Benefits of debating

Skills improvement

Critical thinking skills
Convincing skills
Management skills
Researching skills
Interpersonal skills
Intrapersonal skills
Problem-solving and Leadership skills

Personal development

Personality, self-image and self-discovery
Mental maturity
Confidence
Language and communication
Teamwork

Analysis

This section presents an analysis of the interview data in the light of theories of learning, motivation, cognitive and personality development and language and communication improvement.

The six debaters had varied prior experience in terms of debating and practice of English. None of them had any experience debating in English but two had tried debating in Thai in their grade school. These two reported though that they used an informal and different style. In terms

of language practice, one had spent 8 years abroad and another for one year. A few of them had joined other language-related activities such as the Toastmasters' Club. One mentioned that he was inspired by debating in movies. As they are all motivated language learners, they have already attained a certain level of language proficiency to debate and yet they still make their own opportunities for practice in using the language outside the classroom, a strategy used by good language learners mentioned by Brown (2004).

Regarding their first impression about debating, one of them had a negative feeling from lack of experience in debating itself and knowledge in such domains as environment and politics. One thought debating is not only about language but also about ideas, information and opinions. Two of them were excited to have fun and see the potential experience of debating while only one felt neutral.

As debating is a very demanding activity, the debaters spent much time for self-preparation mainly by researching. They had to prepare for three motions (topics) a day. This confirms the claim of Parcher (1991) that debate improves research skills because creating an argument requires an intensive research of issues and they do not know which side of the motion they would pick so they have to prepare for both sides. Others also prepared themselves emotionally and mentally by trying to stabilize their emotions and to condition their mindset as other teammates were intimidating so they expected the worse at the actual competition when they would face different opponents.

Specific skills improved and aspects of personality development reported by the debaters in the interview are discussed in details as follows.

Skills Improvement

Critical thinking skills

In presenting their arguments, the debaters in a competition need to think critically and quickly. Respondents in this study reported the need for spontaneity in thoughts and criticality

of arguments. They also said they needed to be logical and coherent in the way they present their arguments and to be accurate and sharp in weighing if their idea is worth mentioning and well supported with evidences. One of them, a straight A Computer Engineering student, expressed that debate is the most challenging and fulfilling (although the most draining) of all the activities including course requirements he has ever performed as it requires very deep critical thinking skills and careful analysis. This supports the study of Allen (1995, cited in NDP) that the gain of students in terms of critical thinking who joined competitive debates are much greater by one semester than those who took an argumentation class (and the argumentation class was superior to public speaking or interpersonal communication course). Competency in critical thinking is rightly viewed as a requisite intellectual skill for self-realization as an effective participant in human affairs, for the pursuit of higher education, and for successful participation in the highly competitive world of business and the professions. Debate is today, as it has been since classical times, one of the best methods of learning and applying the principles of critical thinking (Freely, 1990 in Parcher 1999).

Convincing skills

In delivering their constructive speech and in addressing POIs, debaters should be convincing. They need to support their arguments with facts, statistics and citations as necessary to make their claim plausible and reliable. They have to make use of their voice effectively when trying to emphasize a point. As they are adjudicated not only in terms of matter or content but also in terms of manner and method which include correct choice of words, emphasis and organization of ideas such as the use of transitional signals to make their ideas easy to follow and understand, all these are dealt with during the workshop. From the interview, all of them believe that they gained much of their convincing skills and confidence during the competition from rigid practice. Indeed, McBath (in Parcher, 1999) is right in saying that “arguments must be communicated to an audience clearly and succinctly - a difficult cognitive process requiring

conversion between thought, written rhetoric and oral rhetoric. At the end, the debate itself requires the processing of other's arguments and then the reformulation and defense of one's original position" to be convincing. Convincing skill is one of the soft skills needed for successful professional advancement.

Management skills

The debaters reported that they developed a sense of responsibility being able to manage themselves, their team, their time and resources. First of all, they had to learn to manage their time as each speaker is given 7 minutes to deliver his constructive speech including addressing of POIs. They had to coordinate closely with their team-mates to ensure that they do not overlap with each other in terms of specific areas to cover specified in their team split. If they go overtime or under time, they would be penalized so they had to manage what to focus on, how to deliver their speech effectively, decide quickly what materials or evidences to back up their arguments and get signals from their team-mates. Management skill is another aspect of soft skills necessary for the success of individuals in their career.

Interpersonal skills

All of the six debaters reported that they have changed their perspective in viewing others' opinions after their debate experience. Some of them concluded that "coin has always two sides" and this has led them to respect others' opinions whether it is right or wrong. One of them used to be unsociable or unfriendly but the workshop and the competition have changed his view about other people. He used to think that others might just want to befriend him to use him but with his close association with other debaters, he discovered that it is good to befriend and trust others. All of them found a sense of belongingness and realized that everyone in the team is important having his own crucial role to play. Indeed, preparing students to be effective in

dealing with others is a paramount responsibility of the educational institutions as it is an indicator of their success in their careers someday, as Goleman (1995) stressed.

Intrapersonal skills

Assessing one's own capacities and limitations is a skill that can be developed. In debating, debaters discover their own potentials and weaknesses as they deal with others. For example, some of them prefer to be a second speaker because they believe that someone else is more capable of doing the job as a prime minister or a whip. One of them said he prefers to be a prime minister as he is better at defining the motion and giving the team split. Another said, he prefers to be a whip because he is keener at summarizing and analyzing the whole debate. Some of them could perform different roles and were willing to take the place of someone who was absent during the workshop. According to Goleman (1995), people with high EQ have high intrapersonal skills which include self-control and self-discipline, proactivity and persistence and the ability to motivate themselves positively to reach their potentials. Debaters develop a high degree of intrapersonal skills particularly emotional self-awareness in that they use reasons to explain the source of feelings. These skills are necessary for future engineers and professional as they need to rationalize why they get upset to someone or to a situation and be able to control their emotions. NDP's research findings support the claim that debate improves EQ particularly intrapersonal and interpersonal skills when it reported that the conduct of high school and middle school debaters was greatly improved after a year of debating.

Research skills

Another necessary skill debaters reported to have learned from their debating experience is researching. Most of them claimed that they read extensively about all the given (25) motions in the competition which they had never done in their life before. "Debaters have become versed in the techniques of research on the Internet and are utilizing a plethora of computerized research databases. The research skills of debaters are so well known that they have been prized

employees and interns for a variety of private, governmental and international institutions. The most distinguished think tank studying international relations in the world, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, has recently established a special internship to be rewarded exclusively to participants at the National Debate Tournament” (Lennon, in Parcher, 1999, p6). This is very encouraging. Indeed, the representative of European Union expressed during the opening of the EU-Thailand Debate Championships 2008 that they prioritize resumes of applicants with debating experience not only because of their advanced communication skills but also because of their well-developed research and critical thinking skills.

Problem-solving and leadership skills

The debaters also reported they learned how to give wise solution to a problem by identifying the issue and giving reasons why a certain solution or alternative will work. They act like parliamentarians or congressmen and senators in discussing issues and presenting solutions to them. Parcher (1991) states that, “debate and argumentation are at the center of nearly all American political, social and economic decision-making. In many ways, it was a faith in debate itself that was at the root of the formation of American democracy and capitalism”. He adds that British debating societies have a similarly impressive historical record. The oldest debating society in the world, at Oxford, has produced many members of Parliament and six British prime ministers. Survey data from the study of Parcher also confirms that many former debaters occupy top level positions in different areas. Debaters are problem-solvers so they can be great leaders.

Personal Development

Personality, Self-image and Self-discovery

The biggest benefit of all is that the debaters personalised the information they wanted to deliver and argue about. While forming the argument, the debaters used the language they were trained not only to practice the language but to present themselves and express their ideas and

feelings. Thus, the process of using language was made more personal, more authentic and more interesting. This confirms the notion that motivation that is self-authored and endorsed leads to an action and behavior that reveal more interest, excitement and confidence (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

The fact that the debaters themselves had done something that gave them a great feeling of personal achievement came from the incentive value of successful task fulfillment and need for achievement (Atkinson & Raynor, 1974). During the competition, they displayed their ability to debate and impress the audience and the adjudicators; this reinforced that feeling of success in the debaters. Some of them whose families visited and attended the debate competition had a great chance to show them that they are efficient debaters.

Since debating was something new and challenging for the students, they were well motivated to participate in the competition. It is important to note that, from the start, the students did not see the debate as the way to practice English; they saw the debate as actual competition. Thus, the motivation to make their involvement in competing is transferred to the use of language. According to the theory of Self-Determination of Behaviour (Deci & Ryan, 2000), one's goal pursuits can be explained by the three psychological needs of competence, relatedness and autonomy.

Debating was also reported as a path to self-discovery, in terms of finding one's strengths and weaknesses. A debater was technically brilliant. Some other ones had strong ideas. The others knew how to charm the crowd. As everybody makes specific contributions to their debate team, their skills and strengths need to be associated with the motion tactfully. A more specific example is one debater who admitted that he would not be able to be prime minister because he realised he was keen on summarising ideas rather than defining motions. The ability

to identify strengths and weaknesses in the sense of second language learning is seen as already winning 'half the battle' (Dörnyei, 2001a, p. 99).

Mental Maturity

Maturity of mind does not necessarily come with age. Debating has made the participants develop their IQ, as they expressed in the interview. They realised that there is always more than one side of a story and learned to respect other people's opinions even though they did not agree. They were willing to examine other people's beliefs in a more objective way. All of them said that the debating experience made them less judgemental people, not looking at things as right or wrong. They would rather be guided by reason than emotions. Lastly, they learned to accept the reality of the world: you are not always right.

Confidence

The participants expressed that they gained self-confidence from the knowledge that they could handle a public speaking situation. Confidence did not come from being given the techniques and language use but from being successful and knowing that they could debate skillfully. The participants also vocalised that seeing their peers performed well while debating gave them the courage to want to excel too. They also developed the nature of risk-taking while putting ideas across. A few debaters used to be afraid to speak in public. Joining the debate team helped them overcome their stage fright, improved their communication skills and transformed them to natural leaders.

Teamwork

Group bonding became a powerful means to increase the participants' motivation. It was a common training practise for the team-mates to check and monitor each other's debate performance. They also praised and encouraged team-mates to achieve a certain goal; therefore, their shared expectancy of success was high, leading to systematic and powerful peer cooperation (Dörnyei, 2001a). One of the debaters reported that he used to prefer to work alone and often found himself dominating group work. He admitted of having problem trusting other people's competence. After the debate competition, he said he developed the sense of teamwork and the ability to trust his teammates. As they needed to split the team's responsibilities, sharing ones' ideas and knowledge was also crucial. They had to support each other consistently in whatever model they propose or counter-propose. The team also said friendly support and encouragement was essential. As they got to know each other well, the impact of their encouragement was magnified in the knowledge that they were sincere and aimed for the same goal.

Language and Communication

Language, in the beginning, was only speech, the participants took time to transform their language and improve their speech into genuine communication. They learned to minimise extremisms in ideas and thoughts while making arguments. They were trained to be more sensitive and skilled in getting some controversial messages across (such as issues of religion, politics and belief) from their opponents and themselves. The experience taught them that words can create and transform many things, especially emotions. They reported to have gained the art of being diplomatic and minimise extremisms in thoughts, i.e. knowing when to go easy and compromise or when to be more assertive. Communication skills were also gained from the fact that the debaters learned to consider and anticipate their listeners (opponents and adjudicators) what they wanted to hear and what they were thinking. The debaters learned how to focus their

points, how to structure, listen, critically evaluate and discriminate messages at the same time. While doing all that, they had to look active by raising and accepting Point of Information (POIs) to increase points but keeping themselves focused to their speech structure and points. They reported that POIs is the challenge of the debate as they might get distracted with anyone on the opposing side challenging the point they make but they must address (or reject) any POI raised. Handling any POI at the middle of one's speech tests the debater's ability to stay focused and rebut a point cleverly.

Feedback from the adjudicators and the audience was authentic and worthy. Even though the feedback they received was 'controlling feedback' – judging performance against external standards (Dörnyei, 2001b), the debaters learned a great deal from the feedback and knew that their accomplishments were recognised and their errors were addressed constructively. All of the participants, however, agreed that debating requires a good command of English and is not recommended for English learners whose English is limited as this may be an overwhelming experience.

Conclusion

Debate, like other extra-curricular activities, enhances the quality of learning and leads the students to life-long learning. Even though this type of activity requires a great deal of language proficiency, with practice and training technical students can appreciate the benefits of this activity through the development of, for example, cognitive skills, soft skills and linguistic and communication skills. It is hoped that the debate societies will witness more involvement of engineering and technical students. Academic staff and students should be strongly encouraged to participate in this rewarding and life-long learning process.

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Appendix

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- A. Before
 - 1. Did you have any prior experience in debating?
 - 2. Did you have any prior experience in any language-related activities?
 - 3. What were your opinions about debating? In terms of language requirements, content knowledge and debating techniques?
 - 4. Did you have any positive or negative thoughts about debating?
- B. During
 - a. During the workshop
 - 1. How did you prepare yourselves, physically and mentally?
 - 2. How did you find the workshop environment in relation to:
 - a. learning
 - b. personal development
 - c. others (friendship, leadership, networking)
 - 3. What have you learned from the workshop in terms of content and language?
 - b. During the actual competition
 - 1. What did you experience during the competition?
 - 2. Did you find any difficulty in expressing yourself in English? What were they (eg. Vocabulary, structure, organization, conceptualization, etiquette)?
 - 3. How did you handle pressures during the competition?
 - 4. Did your preparation help? (If yes, in what way?)
 - 5. Were there any physical or emotional factors in the environment and the competition that affected you either positively or negatively such as the rooms, background noise, the crowd, the judges, other debaters, etc.?
 - 6. Did you find any particular topic to be relevant to your background and experience? Did you see the advantage in that?
- C. After
 - 1. What are the benefits of the experience?
 - 2. What do you think you could have done better or what you would have done differently?
 - 3. Are you still actively involved in any debate activity?
 - 4. Would you recommend this activity to your friends?
 - 5. What was your realization in seeing the real world through this competition?

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