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The following lesson plan is the result of the joined effort of an international team of trainers. Their focus is to improve quality of debate training. Therefore, an important part of this endeavour is the feedback users provide.

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FEEDBACK IF YOU USE THIS TRAINING PLAN here

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Lesson plan – Preparation time

A. Goal of the lesson

To learn about the different phases of prep time, get practice and expert feedback

B. Activities

Introduction – selling the value (15 min)

Trainer prepares entertaining 1 or 2 minute speech, which should be funny, interesting and provoking, i.e.: “My premises: debates are fun – prep time is not, in fact it can be rather annoying. One debate lasts ca. 60 minutes, if we would not have 15 minutes prep time for each debate, we would save 4 times 15 minutes and thus could have a fifth debate instead...”

Obviously, we are all debaters, and trainer knows all debaters automatically started to think of counter arguments during the speech. Try to hear a collective rebuttal. Everybody (i.e. clockwise) should give one counter argument on the point “why do we need prep time before debates?”

While everybody gives their arguments, the trainer visualizes keywords of the answers under the headline. These answers are the legitimation of the workshop!

Tip: Make the guiding question the headline of your visualization.

Input – the phases of prep time (15 min)

Guiding question “What are different things you do during prep time?”

Collect and visualize the answers and feel free to add your own answers, since you are the expert on this topic today. The answers will be the different options to choose from in the next exercise. Therefore you have to make sure that everybody understands what the keywords mean. Better ask for clarifications about every single point here.

Example:

- Analysing the motion word by word
- Defining the Status quo?
- Pinpoint the Problem(s)?
- Analysing the stakeholders
- Brainstorming





Tip: Sometimes groups (especially of teenagers) have a tendency not to ask, even when the trainer invites them to. If you have the feeling, your group is not asking questions, and you want to make sure that they really understand the different concepts, you can pick one participant per concept and ask them to briefly explain it. This will reveal, if there are misunderstandings. And you can correct them quite easily before the exercise starts.

Exercise I – Prep time step by step (30 Min)

- 1.) Form teams of 2 or 3 according to your debate format. If possible, the teams should be likely to go to a tournament in this constellation of team members.
- 2.) Explain the exercise: They are going to simulate a prep time now. But in this exercise, they can take time outs, call the trainer and figure out how well they went with the single phases. Let them decide as a team which phases of prep time they are going to try and indicate once they have done that.
(For this task it does not make sense to formulate a time limit. Just see, if they need your help and support the teams individually where necessary.)
- 3.) Finally announce the motion and start the clock.

Optional: Exercise II – full prep time simulation (15 minutes)

If you still have enough time you can increase the difficulty level and simulate a full prep time without time outs. The evaluation of this happens automatically in step 5. Wrap up.

Wrap up – what have you learned today? (15 minutes)

“Before we finish the workshop I would like all of you to answer two questions: First, what did you learn in this workshop that you will profit from in your next tournament? And second, is there any problem about your prep time that still is unsolved?”

The second question is optional, but some participants might come up with interesting questions. This is the a good opportunity to help them with your personal expertise. If that is possible, because the problem is really special, you can still ask the group for ideas.

Finally wish them well, say thank you for good ideas or concentrated working atmosphere.

C. Preparation

Prepare motions that suit the requirements of your format, the tournament you want to prepare for and the experience level of your participants. Most importantly, you need to be a well prepared expert, when it comes to questions about the status quo, stakeholders, clashes etc.

Tip: Motions from one the last big tournaments can be useful here, especially if you have been in that debate yourself.