



“MANUAL FOR JUDGES”

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1.- INTRODUCTION

The aim of the manual is to introduce potential judges to their role and what is expected of them. The judge is the most important person in a debate. They listen to every word of every speech and every piece of information with equal attention. They are the person the debaters are most keen to impress, as they will be making the decision on who wins the debate. And once the debate is over, they must send the debaters on their way with constructive feedback, which will both encourage them and improve their skills. Debating without judges cannot happen, at least not as a competitive activity.

Judging a debate is not only particularly important, but also challenging. It involves processing a huge amount of data at a fast pace and under pressure. However, it is suggested that every debater should have a go at judging, as there is no better way to understand how debates work.

The Manual for Judges is structured in the following way. First, the debating roles are described, with a further analysis of the role of the Judge. Then, the criteria categories are analyzed, so that a judge can know how to evaluate them. As a practical tool, this manual includes the scoring sheet to be used by judges during the debate. Further, the manual provides information on what judges should do after the debate and on how to provide constructive feedback to debaters.

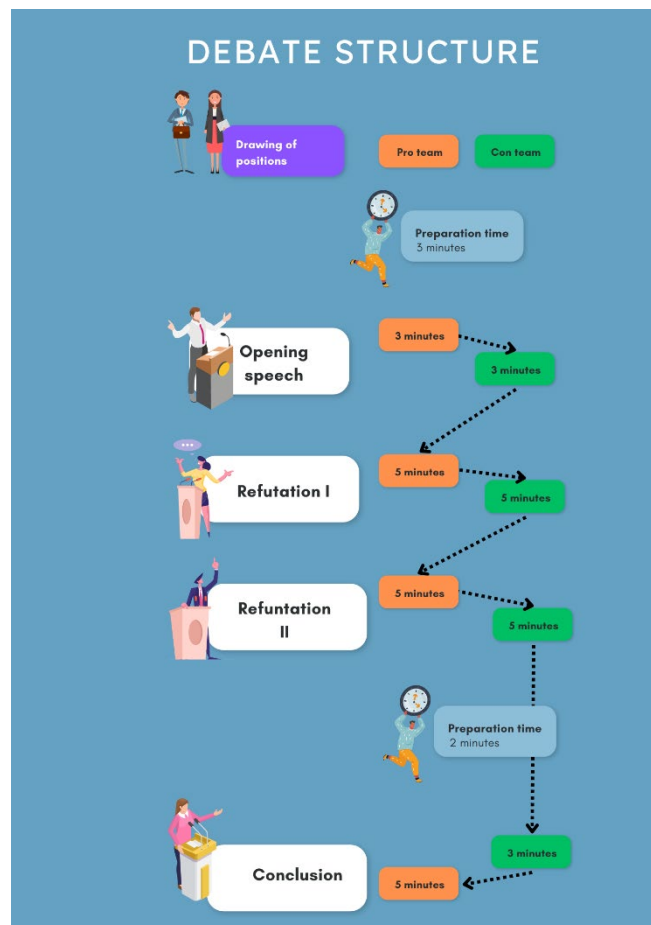


2.- ROLES IN A DEBATE

In each debate, there will be:

- A Speaker of the House.
- Judge(s)/Timekeeper(s).
- Three speakers for each team (Pros and Cons), one of whom will give either the first or second speech as well as the reply to speech.

Initially, the Speaker of the House calls the House to order and opens the floor. Then, the Speaker of the House invites the First Speaker for the Proposition to begin the debate. The order of the debate can be the following:



Source: own research.

Image 1. Debate Structure.

3.- ROLE OF THE JUDGE

The judge has three main roles during the debate:

- First, the Judge keeps time, oversees that the rules are being followed and helps to keep the debate on time and the positive experience for all.
- Secondly, the Judge provides constructive feedback for the debaters, commenting on strengths and areas for improvement.
- Finally, the Judge determines the winner of each debate.



4.- JUDGING CRITERIA

The judge's task is to decide which team has made the more persuasive case. But how can one decide upon it? The risk in the judge's role is that they may fall for the debater who seems the most impressive. This happens if one approaches judging in a 'holistic' manner. What this might mean is that a judge might award the debate to someone who speaks with great fluency but little substance over another debater who may speak with less confidence but in fact has much more solid, well-founded arguments.

This is why it is important for a judge to make decisions based on pre-set criteria. To achieve that, the key is to break the debaters' performance down into the key skills of debating and assess each one of them separately. There are three main skills' / criteria categories for judging.

4.1.- Criteria Category "Strategy"

The first criteria category in judging is that of "strategy" and it involves a series of criteria:

4.1.1.- Role

The criterion of the "role" refers to whether each speaker has fulfilled their tasks, according to the step of the debate. Tasks per step of the debate are described in the table below:

Speaker	Tasks
First Proposition	Fair definition Proposition case line Allocation of arguments to be covered by each Speaker on the Proposition Constructive arguments
First Opposition	Accept or challenge definition Rebuttal of first proposition's arguments Opposition case line Allocation of arguments to be covered by each Speaker on the Opposition Constructive arguments
Second Proposition	Rebuttal Constructive arguments assigned to them by First Speaker
Second Opposition	Rebuttal Constructive arguments assigned to them by First Speaker
Third Proposition	Rebuttal Small amount of new constructive material if assigned by First Speaker No new material otherwise
Third Opposition	Rebuttal No new arguments
Reply	Tasks are the same for Opposition and Proposition (Opposition Reply goes first) Only focus on the key issues of the debate, not minor details Isolate the "key" areas of clash in the debate Demonstrate why their team's case best carried the day

Source: own research

Table 1. Speaker/Tasks

4.1.2.- Definition

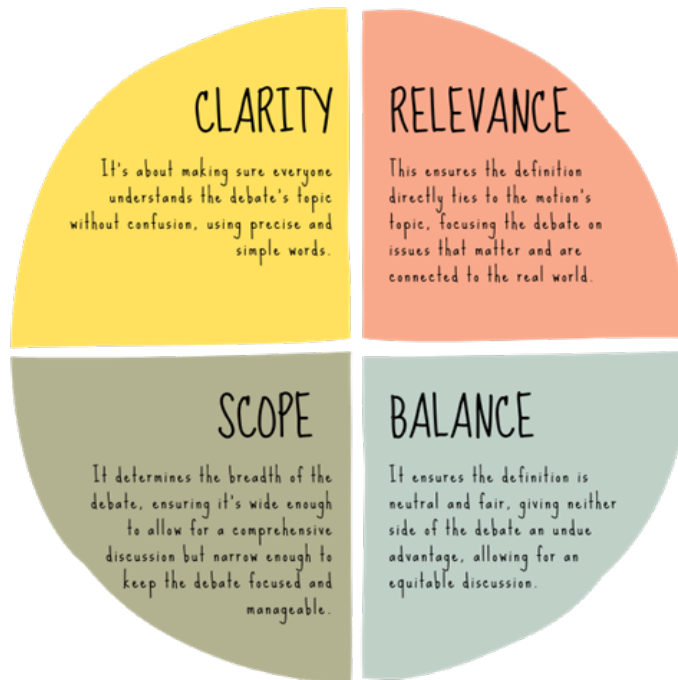
The judge needs to write down the definition as soon as it is given. In this way, if it ever comes up as an issue later in the debate, they will have a record of exactly what was said. A tip is to write the words of the motion in advance vertically on a sheet of scrap paper so that the definition can be filled in beside each word as the first speaker defines the motion.

In a debate, a Proposition and an Opposition team contest the truth or falsehood of a motion. The first duty of the Proposition is to give a fair and clear definition of the motion. A fair definition is one which allows for a reasonable debate to follow; an unfair definition will attempt to narrow the debate to the point where it is impossible for the Opposition to contest or will even make debate a logical impossibility. A clear and fair definition is one that avoids any unnecessary ambiguity by succinctly delineating all relevant terms in the motion.

If the Proposition fails to deliver on either of these criteria, it is the prerogative of the Opposition to contest the definition, either in part (redefining selected terms) or in total. The same burden applies to the Opposition. Their chosen definition must allow for a fair debate and must clearly delineate the terms of the contest. If the Opposition wishes to challenge the definition it must be done in the first speaker's speech. Not commenting on the definition by the first speaker is the same as accepting it, and later challenges should be seen as inconsistency among the Opposition.



THE 4 PILARS OF A FAIR DEFINITION IN DEBATE

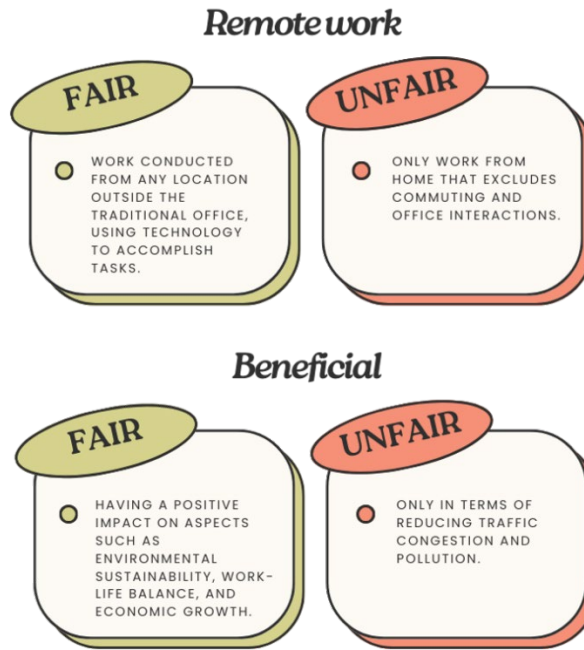


Source: own research

Image 2. The 4 pillars of a fair definition in debate

EXERCISE: Define the key terms of the motion "This house believes that remote work is beneficial for society". To do so:

1. Identify key terms: List the terms within the motion that are crucial to its understanding and debate. Consider why each term is significant and how it influences the motion's interpretation.
2. Define key terms: Using the four pillars, create definitions for each identified term. Ensure your definitions are clear, relevant to the topic, of appropriate scope, and balanced to allow fair debate from both sides.
3. Review: Compare your definitions with the four pillars to ensure they meet the criteria for a fair and effective debate.



Source: own research

Image 3. Remote work

Pilars	"REMOTE WORK"	"BENEFICIAL"
Clarity	The fair definition covers various forms of remote work without being overly restrictive. The unfair definition unnecessarily narrows the concept, leading to ambiguity about what constitutes "office interactions."	The fair definition outlines areas where remote work could be beneficial, allowing for a comprehensive discussion. The unfair definition focuses on environmental aspects, which may not fully capture the societal impacts of remote work.
Relevance	Both definitions are relevant, but the fair definition allows for a broader discussion on remote work's impacts on society.	The fair definition ties directly back to the broad societal impacts, keeping the debate aligned with the motion. The unfair definition's focus on traffic and pollution, while relevant, overlooks other critical societal benefits, narrowing the debate's relevance.
Scope	The fair definition offers a broad scope for debate, considering various remote work forms. The unfair definition limits the debate to a very specific scenario, reducing the scope of discussion.	By covering multiple impact areas, the fair definition ensures a wide-ranging debate. The unfair definition's narrow focus restricts the debate's scope to environmental issues.
Balance	The fair definition is neutral, providing a basis for argument on both sides. The unfair definition may bias the debate towards negative impacts by highlighting the lack of office interactions.	The fair definition allows for balanced arguments on various societal benefits and challenges of remote work. The unfair definition may skew the debate towards environmental arguments, potentially sidelining other beneficial aspects.

Source: own research

Image 4. Pillars "Remote work" and "Beneficial"

SOLUTION

1. Identify the key terms: we have identified two key terms in the motion: "This house believes that remote work is beneficial for society"
2. Define key terms: To make the exercise clearer, we have provided a fair and an unfair definition for each of the key terms.
3. Review: Compare the definitions with the 4 pillars to ensure they meet the criteria for a fair and effective debate.

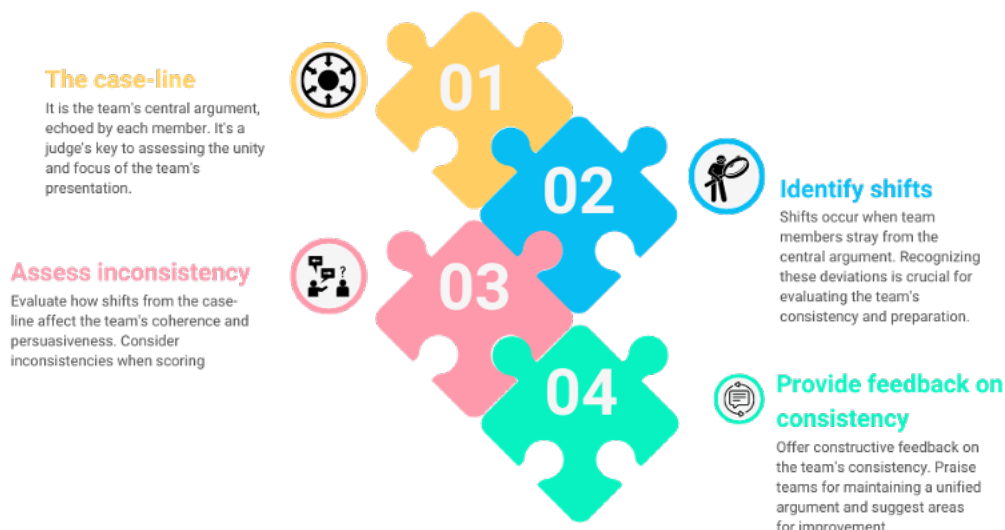
4.1.3.- Consistency

Debating is a team pursuit. As such it is imperative that each team is comprised of consistent speakers. Several outstanding but contradictory debaters cannot win. A well-prepared team will have a 'case-line' – a one or two-sentence summary of their case, repeated by each speaker. If the case-line "shifts" during the debate this is penalized.



What is consistency?

It is the backbone of a team's argument, ensuring all speakers are aligned and coherent. It strengthens the team's position and makes their argument more persuasive



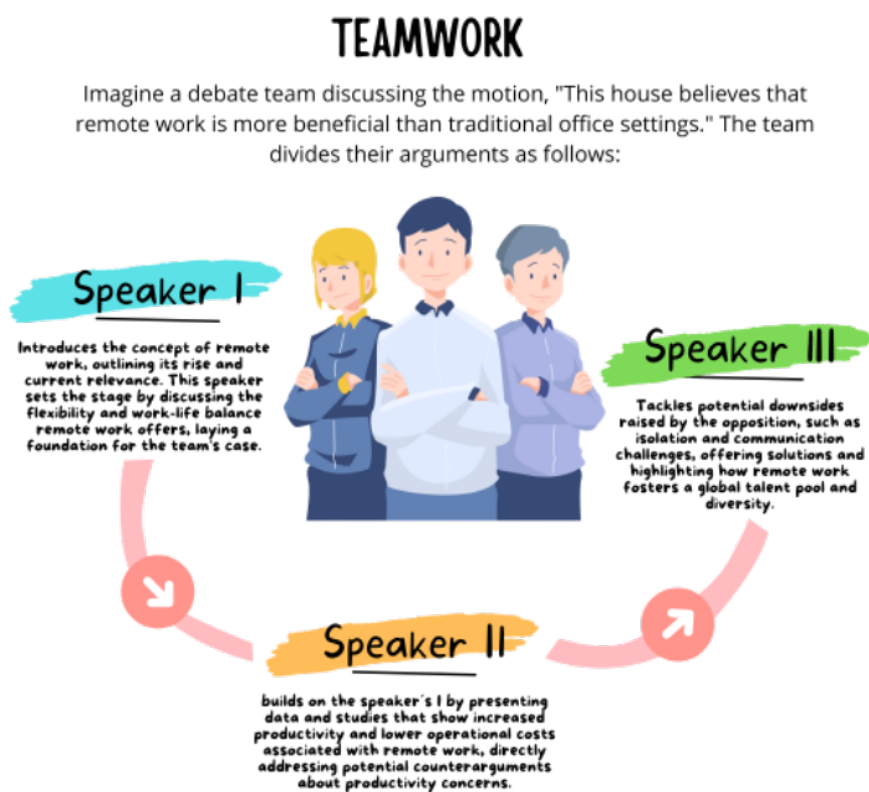
Source: own research.

Image 5. What is consistency?

4.1.4.- Teamwork

Besides being consistent, a good debate team also works together. The argument needs to be divided appropriately between the team members. It is a positive quality for debaters to quietly confer with each other while they are at the table, provided they do not distract the speaker or the judge(s). Also, it is preferable for all team members to take at least one point of information, rather than having one person who always speaks.

TIP: example of a teamwork



Source: own research.

Image 6. Teamwork.

4.1.5.- Points of Information (PoI)

A Point of Information (PoI) is a short interjection by a member of the team who does not have the floor. They are forbidden in the first and last minutes of the main debate speeches and none are allowed during the Reply speeches. To give a PoI, the debater must stand and say something to the effect of PoI. Before delivering the PoI, the offering debater must wait for the speaker to accept the point. If the point is declined, the debater

must sit down without further comment. The speaker is entitled to finish their sentence prior to acknowledging the Pol.

In the unprotected time in each speech, the speaker should accept at least one, and usually not more than two. If the speaker does not accept any points, it seems as if they are 'afraid' of what the other side might say. Speakers who take too many are not penalised as such, but a speaker who does so is unlikely to be able to fulfill their role correctly and could lose points there. Speakers who try to give points of information inappropriately (in the first or last minute of the speech, before the speaker has finished dealing with another Pol, etc.) should be marked down.

POINTS OF INFORMATION IN DEBATE



1 Points of Information (PoIs)



A Poi is a brief interjection offered by a non-speaking team member during an opponent's speech, used to challenge or query the speaker in real-time.

2 Timing for PoIs

PoIs are allowed during the unprotected times of a speech, excluding the first and last minutes. These protected times are meant to give speakers space to begin and conclude their arguments without interruption.



3 Offering and accepting PoIs

Speakers should aim to accept at least one Poi during their speech, demonstrating openness to engage with the opposition's challenges.

4 Impact

Judges evaluate the use of PoIs to assess debaters' readiness to engage with the opposition and the fluid integration of these exchanges into their arguments.



Source: own research.

Image 7. Points of information in debate.

4.1.6.- Organization of argument

A strong speech should be well structured and have a clear beginning, middle and end. There should be clear signposts along the way to allow the audience and judge(s) to follow the line of argument. Students should also be cognizant of the time limits for their speeches and how to divide their time between rebuttal, signposting, and constructive material.



Source: own research.

Image 8. Evaluating Speech Organization.

4.2.- Criteria Category “Content”

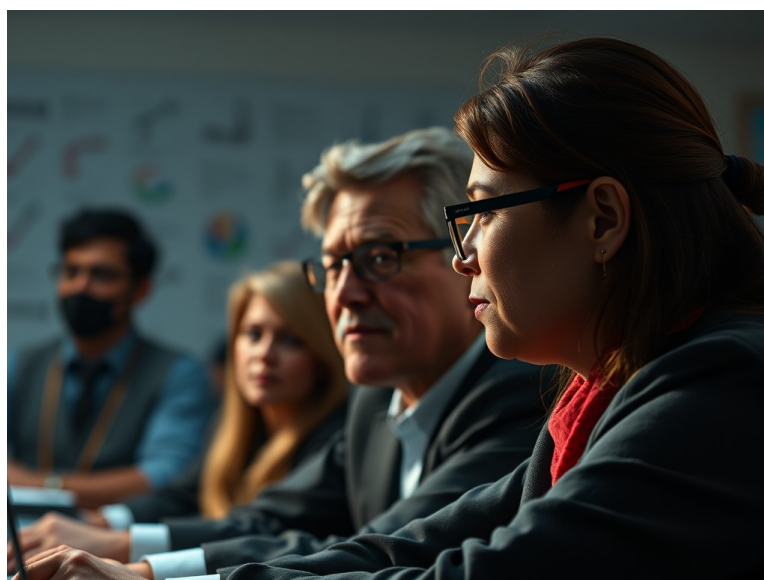
The second criteria category in judging is that of “content” and it involves the following:

4.2.1.- Quality of information

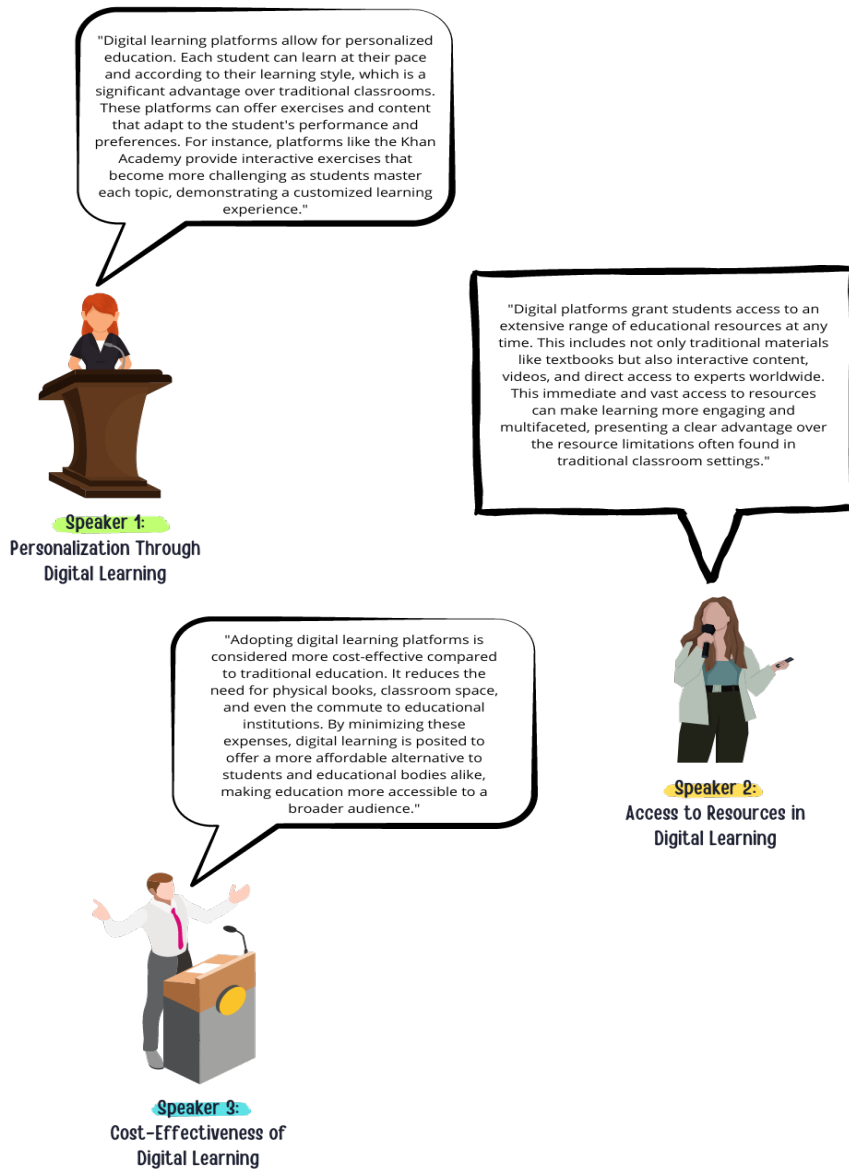
A team’s case-line should be supported by their constructive arguments in a logical and understandable way. Their constructive arguments, in turn, should be supported by facts and examples, usually mentioning the source. Delivering an argument with no facts, figures or proof to document is a sign of a poorly prepared debate and should be marked down. Sometimes judge(s) have personal views that lead them to show preference over one side of the argument prior to the debate. These personal preferences should be put aside when judging a debate. A well-chosen motion will allow both sides to put forward reasonable cases.

EXERCISE: Rank the following arguments from stronger to weaker according to the quality of the information presented:

- Consider how each argument supports its claims with specific examples, data, or research.
- Evaluate the clarity and relevance of the information provided in the context of arguing for the effectiveness of digital learning platforms versus traditional classroom settings.



Debate Motion: "Digital learning platforms are more effective than traditional classroom settings."



"Digital learning platforms allow for personalized education. Each student can learn at their pace and according to their learning style, which is a significant advantage over traditional classrooms. These platforms can offer exercises and content that adapt to the student's performance and preferences. For instance, platforms like the Khan Academy provide interactive exercises that become more challenging as students master each topic, demonstrating a customized learning experience."

Speaker 1:
Personalization Through Digital Learning

"Digital platforms grant students access to an extensive range of educational resources at any time. This includes not only traditional materials like textbooks but also interactive content, videos, and direct access to experts worldwide. This immediate and vast access to resources can make learning more engaging and multifaceted, presenting a clear advantage over the resource limitations often found in traditional classroom settings."

Speaker 2:
Access to Resources in Digital Learning

"Adopting digital learning platforms is considered more cost-effective compared to traditional education. It reduces the need for physical books, classroom space, and even the commute to educational institutions. By minimizing these expenses, digital learning is posited to offer a more affordable alternative to students and educational bodies alike, making education more accessible to a broader audience."

Speaker 3:
Cost-Effectiveness of Digital Learning

Source: own research.

Image 9. Debate Motion: "Digital learning platforms are more effective than traditional classroom settings."

SOLUTION



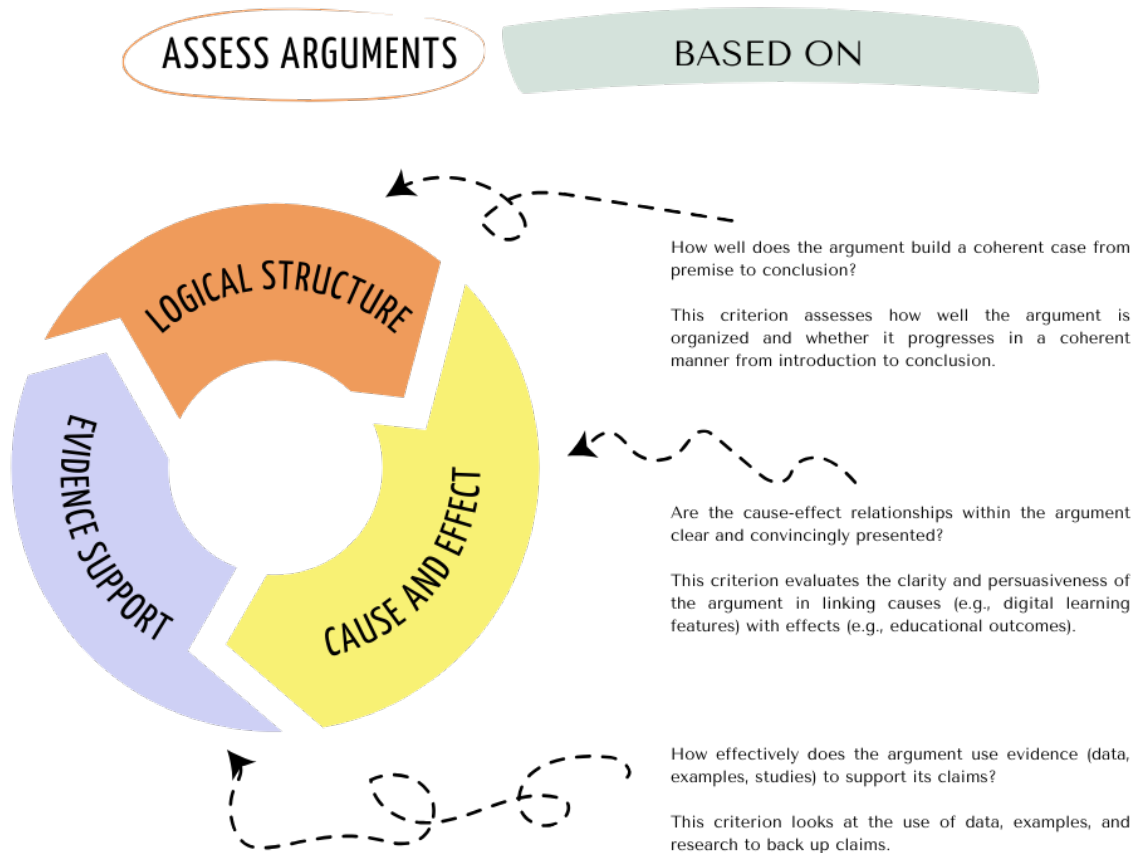
Source: own research.

Image 10. Digital Learning.

4.2.2.- Quality of Analysis

When assessing each speech, the judge needs to think about the quality of the analysis. There should be logical and well-structured links between cause and effect. Speakers should analyze, explain and provide evidence that supports their case. The speakers will convince with the content of their argument.

TIP



Source: own research.

Image 11. Assess Arguments.

EXERCISE

Create a structured assessment of the three previous arguments (personalization through digital learning, access to resources in digital learning and cost-effectiveness of digital learning), evaluating each of them based on the three criteria: Logical Structure, Cause and Effect, and Evidence Support. Each criterion must be scored on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 represents the highest quality.

SOLUTION

	Personalization	Access to Resources	Cost-Effectiveness
Logical Structure	<p>The argument is clearly structured, beginning with an introduction to the concept, followed by examples, and concluding with the implications for learning effectiveness. It's easy to follow and logically progresses from point to point.</p> <p>5</p>	<p>The argument is well-organized, but transitions between points could be smoother to enhance coherence. It introduces the concept, discusses the types of resources available, and suggests potential benefits.</p> <p>4</p>	<p>This argument makes broad assertions about the cost-saving benefits of digital learning but lacks a detailed structure that clearly delineates costs and benefits, making it less cohesive.</p> <p>3</p>
Cause and effect	<p>This argument effectively links the personalized nature of digital learning platforms (cause) with improved learning outcomes (effect), using specific examples like Khan Academy to illustrate this relationship.</p> <p>5</p>	<p>It asserts that access to a variety of resources leads to a more engaging and comprehensive learning experience but doesn't strongly link this access to specific learning outcomes.</p> <p>3</p>	<p>The cause (adoption of digital learning) and its effect (reduced educational costs) are mentioned, but the argument fails to persuasively link these cost savings to the effectiveness or quality of education.</p> <p>2</p>
Evidence support	<p>While the argument uses specific examples and references to support its claims, the inclusion of broader studies or statistical evidence could strengthen it further.</p> <p>4</p>	<p>The argument mentions the broad range of resources available through digital platforms but lacks direct, cited evidence demonstrating how these resources improve educational effectiveness.</p> <p>3</p>	<p>The argument is the weakest in terms of evidence, making broad claims about cost-effectiveness without providing concrete data, comparisons, or examples to substantiate these claims.</p> <p>2</p>

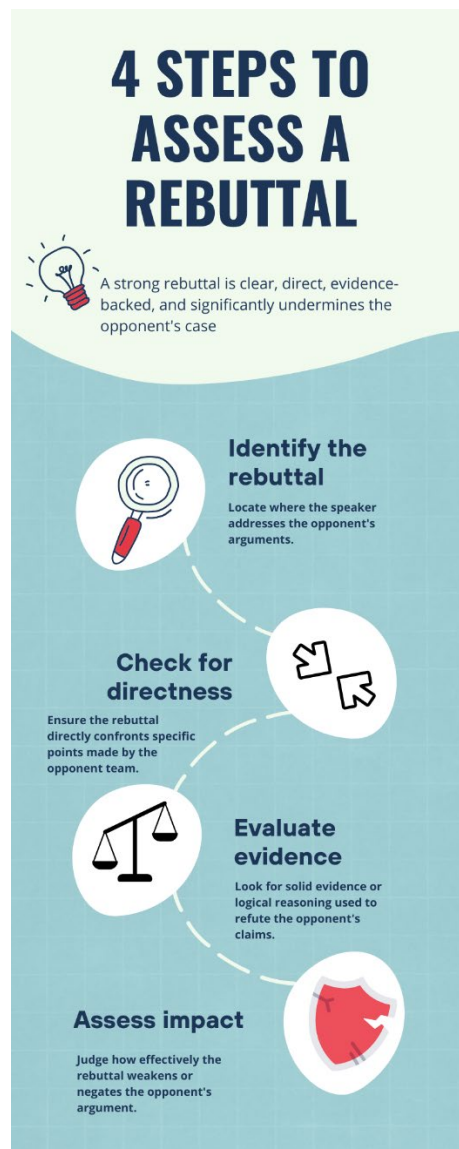
Source: own research.

Image 12. Structured assessment.

4.2.3.- Rebuttal

Rebuttal is as important a part of a debate speech as constructive arguments. For the group of speakers, usually it is their main task. Teams must argue their own cases and refute those of their opponents. If an argument is not rebutted, it stands, no matter how weak it is.

TIP



Source: own research.

Image 13. Four steps to assess a rebuttal.

4.2.4.- Timing

Speaking for an inappropriate amount of time (i.e., stopping well before the final bell or going on so long that the timekeeper rings the bell continuously) should be marked down. Speakers should manage their time well. They are marked for giving sufficient time to each part of their speech without rushing through anything, but also without unnecessarily repeating themselves.

4.3.- Criteria Category "Style"

The last criteria category in judging is that of "style" and it consists of the following criteria:

4.3.1.- Confidence

The speaker may refer to brief notes but should not simply read a speech. Speakers may opt to use index cards, legal pads, or sheets of paper. Provided that they use them confidently and do not distract the audience by fumbling with them, one is not preferable to another. A strong debater will make eye contact with their audience and thus engage them in the debate.



4.3.2.- Pace

A good speaker will speak at a pace that is easy to follow, not too fast, nor too slow.

4.3.3.- Pitch/Volume

The speaking style should be fluid and engaging. A speaker should not speak at one pitch the whole time but raise or lower their pitch to keep the audience's attention. They should be loud enough to be heard, but not shouting.

4.3.4.- Politeness

Politeness is paramount in debating. Any bad language or personal attack on another speaker should be marked down severely.

TIP

STYLE

A debater's style is crucial in engaging and persuading the audience. Focus on confidence, pace, pitch/volume, and politeness for impactful delivery.



Source: own research.

Image 14. Style.

5.- DEBATE SCORING SHEET

Judges mark the scores for the teams during the debate using a scoring sheet for each one, based on the criteria described in the previous section. The marks for Strategy represent 40% of the mark, for Content another 40% and for Style 20%.



DEBATE EVALUATION: The following is an evaluation of the performance of students who have participated in a debate in the Rector format. In this format the aspects to be evaluated that are privileged are: **strategy (1), content (2), style (3)**.
 SCORING: All items are evaluated from 1 to 5. Where 1 would be very unfavorable and 5 would be excellent.
 The marks for Strategy represent 40% of the mark, for Content another 40% and for Style 20%.

1) Strategy.

The ability to bring only the most important arguments further into the debate.

ITEMS	For	Against
Role: Ensures speakers fulfill assigned tasks in each debate step, including defining the motion, presenting arguments, and rebutting opponents.		
Definition: Provides a clear and fair interpretation of the motion, crucial for facilitating a balanced debate.		
Consistency: Requires maintaining a cohesive argument throughout the debate, reflected in a consistent case-line.		
Teamwork: Encourages collaborative argumentation, effective division of arguments among team members, and active participation by all.		
Points of Information (PoI): Short interjections used judiciously to offer additional arguments or challenge opposing points, subject to specific rules.		
Organization of Argument: Emphasizes structuring speeches effectively with clear introductions, arguments, and conclusions, along with managing time efficiently.		

2) Content

Involves presenting well-supported arguments with factual evidence and logical coherence, evaluating evidence to persuade the audience, effectively challenging opponents' arguments (rebuttal), and managing speaking time efficiently.

ITEMS	For	Against
Quality of information: supported by facts and examples, with an emphasis on logical coherence and source citation.		
Quality of Analysis: Evaluation of the logical connections and evidence provided to support arguments, aiming to persuade the audience.		
Rebuttal: Crucial part of debate speeches, involving challenging opponents' arguments and defending one's own case effectively.		
Timing: Effective management of speaking time to avoid speaking too briefly or excessively, ensuring each part of the speech is adequately addressed without rushing or repetition.		

3) Style.

Style in classroom debate refers to how speakers present their arguments and interact with the audience, incorporating confidence, pace, pitch/volume, and politeness.

ITEMS	For	Against
Confidence: Speakers rely on brief notes while maintaining eye contact and engaging the audience, avoiding reading directly from notes.		
Pace: Speakers maintain a steady and easily understandable speaking speed, neither too fast nor too slow.		
Pitch/Volume: Speakers vary pitch to keep audience engaged and maintains an appropriate volume, avoiding monotone or excessive loudness.		
Politeness: Speakers maintain civility, refraining from using bad language or personal attacks on other speakers, with severe penalties for breaches of politeness.		

Source: own research

Table 2. Debate evaluation.

6.- WHAT SHOULD A JUDGE DO AFTER A DEBATE

In case of co-judging, or of having a panel of judges, they should meet in a separate (virtual) space where they cannot be overheard, to compare notes. This should be the first time they communicate with each other.



Go through each speaker in turn, discussing each of their

skill / debating criteria in turn. Judges should proceed to mark after having discussed all that is to be discussed about debaters' skills. If judges agree on the mark, it is easy. If they disagree, they should go back to their notes and discuss some more. It may well be that this discussion will uncover that one judge has missed something a debater has done well or overlooked a mistake they have made; that is the point of having more than one judge, so they can balance out each other's blind spots. If they still cannot agree, only as a last resort, split the difference. Do not skimp on the discussion - it is important to produce a fair verdict - but equally be brisk and businesslike about it. Courtesy and respect of co-judges' views is as important as not being afraid to challenge them. Avoid the sort of conversation where people keep saying the same thing over and over again.

If one is judging by themselves, the process will be faster, but should still not be skimmed. Read the notes carefully and check that skills / debating criteria have been given equal consideration with the mark. Finally, add up the marks and consider whether the team that got the most marks really made the most persuasive case. If the result is remarkably close, or does not feel right, the judge(s) need to go back to their notes and tweak the numbers if that gives what feels like the right result.

7.- HOW SHOULD A JUDGE GIVE FEEDBACK

When giving feedback, the judge needs to go through each speaker in turn, and each of their skills / debating criteria in turn. They start with the positive and end with the positive but include in the middle what needs improvement. This is easy if detailed notes are kept. The positive points will offer material for encouragement, and the negative points will provide areas for development. If there is a co-judge or judges, the feedback duty should be divided, e.g., one taking proposition, one taking opposition.

Judges should not announce the verdict until the very end, as debaters will stop listening to feedback if they already know the verdict.

Judges should make themselves available for further questions and clarification after the debate. However, if there is any hint from a debater that they are challenging the verdict, the judge should make it clear politely but firmly that it cannot be changed and should report the incident as soon as they can to the competition organizer. It is a fundamental principle of competitive debating that a judge's verdict, once given, is final.



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