Should school be a place for debate?

DEVELOPING DISCUSSIONS

Step One: In a group of four, brainstorm as many PRO and CON arguments for the topic: Should school be a place for debate?

Step Two: All group members memorize the list of PROs and CONs.

Step Three: Divide the groups of four into pairs and have a discussion by doing the following:

1. One partner is the “director;” the other is the “actor.”
2. The director claps and says, “Should school be a place for debate?: PRO!”
3. The actor gives 1-2 PRO reasons for having a debate in school.
4. The director claps and says “CON!,” and the actor uses a transition like “However...,” “On the other hand...,” or “Then again...” and gives a reason or two for not having debates in school.
5. The director claps again and says “PRO!,” and the actor uses a different transition and gives more PRO reasons. Repeat.
6. When finished, the director paraphrases what he or she heard and tries to guess which side the actor is really on.

Step Four: Switch roles and repeat Step Three.

What the ACTOR might say:
- One reason for having debates is...
- Another reason is...
- Additionally, debates in the classroom are positive (negative) because...
- However, on the other hand...
- A reason for not having debates in the classroom is...
- Furthermore, we should not use classroom time for debates because...

What the DIRECTOR might say:
- Pro! or Con!
- What I heard you say is...
- I believe you said...
- Correct me if I’m wrong, but I thought I heard you say...
- Based on what I heard, I think that you really believe that...