

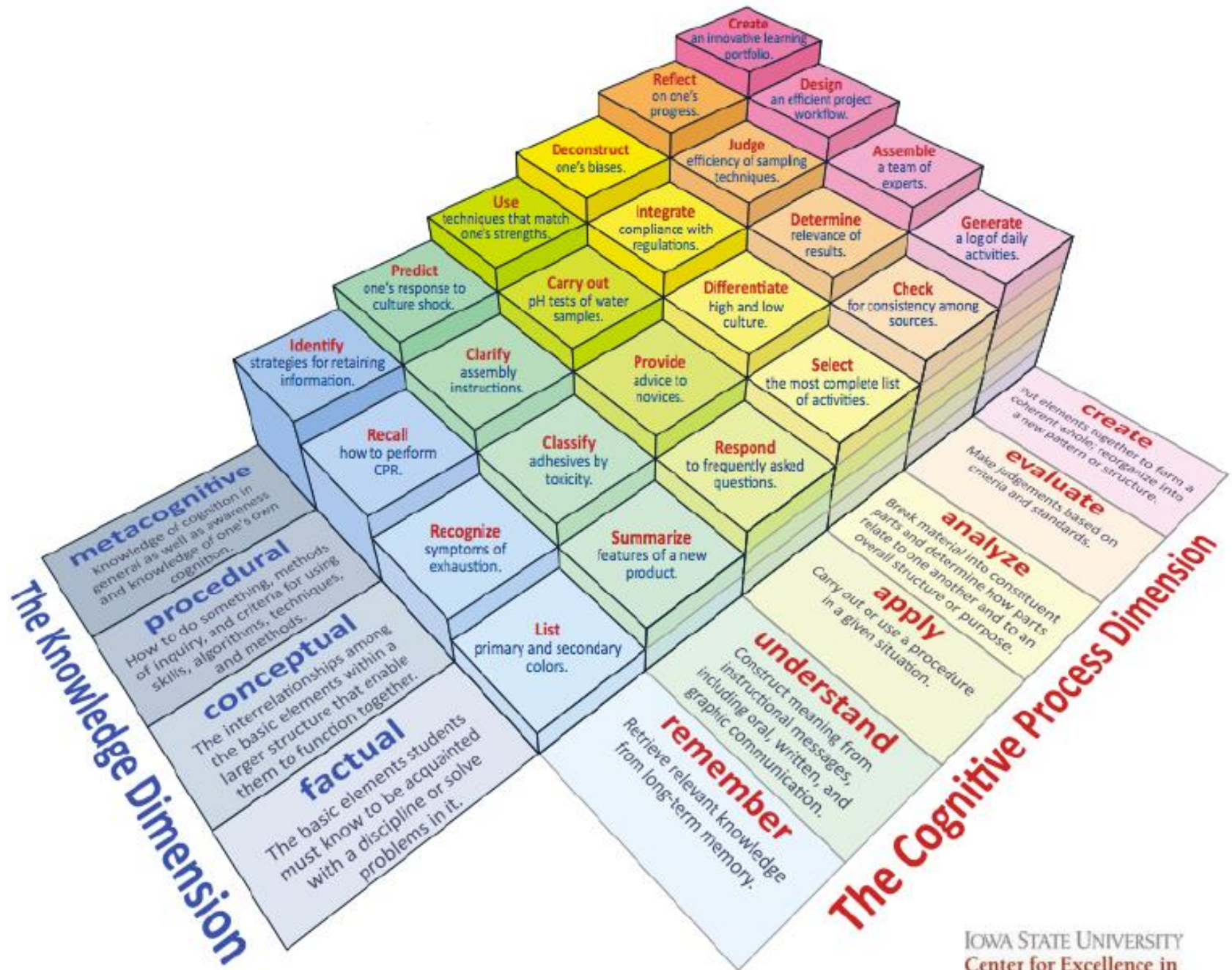
Debate in the Classroom

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Learning Goals

- Articulate why debate can be a useful teaching method
- Identify different types of debates and strategies for using them in class discussions
- Design your own debate for use in the classroom



Why Debate? (Students)

- Develop important career skills
- Opportunity to participate in class
- Combine individual and group work
- Engaging and exciting
- Helpful way to learn material for assessments

Why Debate? (Teachers)

- Help meet your learning goals
- Motivate students to prepare for class
- Way to discuss controversial issues
- Enjoyable
- Raise student evaluations

Choosing a Question

- Proposition or question suggesting a change in the status quo
 - At least two sides that can be reasonably supported with evidence (and do not have relative agreement)
 - Relevant to students and course material
 - Simple enough to debate, yet complex enough to develop multiple arguments
 - Worded in neutral language

Choosing a Question

- Fact (Disputed):
 - “Vienna is a culturally German city.”
- Value:
 - “It is morally acceptable to break laws you do not agree with.”
- Policy:
 - “The government should ban the sub-therapeutic use of antibiotics in livestock.”

Preparing to Debate

- Choose debate style
 - Consider your goals, physical space
- Develop questions
 - Both main questions and questions during debate
- Go over debate process ahead of time
- Provide relevant materials
- Assign teams/order

The Debate

- Keep time
 - Give non-verbal time signals to debaters
- Keep order
 - You are the moderator
- Keep focus
 - Ensure you stay on topic
- Keep notes
 - Ask questions at the end

Grading

- Participation points
- Professor grading
- Peer grading
- Mixed
- Papers, outlines, or notes

Full Class Debate (30 min.)

- 10 minutes: Prep
- 5 minutes: Opening Statement (Side 1)
- 5 minutes: Opening Statement (Side 2)
- 3 minutes: Rebuttal (Side 1)
- 3 minutes: Rebuttal (Side 2)
- 2 minutes: Closing Statement (Side 1)
- 2 minutes: Closing Statement (Side 2)
- Debrief

Full Workshop Debate (Abbreviated)

“The government should ban violent video games”

- 1 minute Individual Prep
- 5 minute Group Prep
- 2 minute Opening Statements
- 1 minute Rebuttals
- 1 minute Closing Statements
- Debrief – Advantages? Disadvantages?

Three Question Debate (40 min.)

- 10 minutes: Prep
- 3 minutes: Team 1 Main (Q1, Q2, Q3)
 - Alternate 1st main points (via coin flip)
- 3 minutes: Team 2 Main (Q1, Q2, Q3)
- 2 minutes: Team 1 Rebuttal (Q1, Q2, Q3)
- 2 minutes: Team 2 Rebuttal (Q1, Q2, Q3)
- Debrief

Chain Debate

- Present a topic and alternate between teams.
Each person must:
 - **Present** a new argument supporting or opposing the topic
 - **Attack** an argument that has been made previously
 - **Defend** an argument that has been attacked by somebody else
 - **Extend** an argument made by a team member

“Spar” Debates/Chain Debate II

- Present multiple items to debate, either from a single topic or multiple topics
- Students debate 1:1 for each question
- 5 minutes: Prep
- 90 seconds each: Opening Statements
- 1 minute each: Cross Examination
- 1 minute each: Closing Statements

Small Group Debate (40 min.)

- 5 minutes: Prep
- 5 minutes: Opening Statement (Side 1)
- 5 minutes: Opening Statement (Side 2)
- 5 minutes: Rebuttal (Side 1)
- 5 minutes: Rebuttal (Side 2)
- 15 minutes: Audience questions both teams
- Debrief

Workshop Small Group Debate

“Universities should abolish tenure.”

- 2 minute Group Prep
- 1 minute Opening Statements
- 2 minute Mid-Debate Prep
- 2 minute Cross Examinations
- Debrief – Advantages? Disadvantages?

Town Hall

- Introduce topic
- Students give 2 minute persuasive speeches
 - May assign particular roles to represent
- Council deliberates
- “Citizens” vote on topic
- “Reporters” may summarize meeting

Alternative: Online Debates

- Sakai
 - Use the Forums tab to post debate questions
 - Students respond individually or in teams to the question
- Createdebate.com
 - Create debate online and send students the link
 - Caution: This is a public debate site!

Other Resources

- International Debate Education Association (IDEA) at idebate.org
- *Many Sides: Debate Across the Curriculum* by Snider & Schnurer ([full text available online](#))
- *The Debatabase Book* by the IDEA editors ([full text available online](#))

Questions? Additional suggestions?