**MS Big Questions - Lesson #8**

**Unit Name**: Debate Drills

**Topic**: “Questions and Answers”

**Essential Questions**:

1. Question 1 - What are the speaker’s arguments?
2. Question 2 - What are four Cs of questions? (clarification, concession, contradiction, challenge)
3. Question 3 - What does it mean to refute a claim?

**Objectives**:

1. Objective 1 - Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.
2. Objective 2 - Delineate a speaker’s argument and specific claims, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.

**Instructional Materials Needed**:

Students should come to class with prepared debate arguments, either on a topic previously assigned or in response to a position presented in class the day before. Arguments should be structured as claims, warrants, and impacts.

If possible - a video clip of a courtroom trial from a movie or television drama (Perry Mason would an example of a G-rated one, etc.) that shows a cross-examination scene. If that is not accessible, a video clip of cross-examination from an online debate (NSDA Resource Package).

**References** *(if applicable)*:

None needed.

**Overview of Lesson** *(general outline of what will be covered)*:

Student will take turns presenting arguments, asking questions, and responding to questions or statements given them.

**Detailed Step-by-Step Lesson**:

\*\*This lesson can be repeated as often as desired as a drill. In those instances, the teacher can skip directly to #3.

1. 10 minutes - Teacher will show the video clip then lead the class in a discussion of the purpose of cross-examination - first in general, then in a debate.
2. 10 minutes - Teacher will share that there are different types of questions to ask in cross-examination. One way to remember types of questions is to think of 4 Cs:
   1. Clarification - this question type is used to make sure that the opponent understands the point being made by the speaker. If the speaker spoke too rapidly, was unclear, or the structure was confusing, the opposing debater may have missed something. Clarification questions allow those points to be made clear so that the debate can continue. Clarification questions should be asked first if they are needed. Example: “What was your second point?”
   2. Concessions - this type of question is used to get the other side to concede a point/truth, etc. They are often worded in an innocuous way. Example: “Would you agree that liberties give meaning to life?”
   3. Contradictions - this type of question seeks to reveal possible contradictions or “tension” in the speaker’s position. Ex: “Your first argument says that the state is responsible for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. But in your second argument you say that the individual is responsible for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Which is it?”
   4. Challenge - this question type often lays the groundwork for a point of refutation that will be made in the next speech. It directly challenges the assumption underlying the speaker’s argument. Example: “Your second argument says that the government has no responsibility to people living in flood plains. Who was it that allowed developers to build houses there in the first place?”
   5. Note: there are a number of different ways to classify questions. The key is to help students understand that there are different types of questions, that they have different purposes, and that they know when to apply them. The labels do not matter. Questioning is one of those skills that will become more sophisticated with practice.
3. 30 minutes - have students sit in a circle. Students should take turns sharing one of their arguments. They should stand up and address the rest of the room. Once the student has offered one entire argument, the other students should raise their hands to ask questions or make a statement. The teacher can call on students. The goal is for students to ask different TYPES of questions. Students can also make a statement - a point of refutation. A point of refutation should first reference the argument made, then make a counter-claim, counter-warrant, or challenge the impact. The speaker must respond to each question or statement. Once the original speaker has answered questions/statements for 3 minutes or so she/he can call on another student to speak.
   1. Note: this can be a fast, engaging activity. Students like to ask questions/make points. It is suggested that teachers start with one of the more confident students to begin the activity. If doing this activity near the beginning of the year, the teacher should call on the students to prevent anyone from feeling too uncomfortable. Later in the year the students should be trusting each other more.

4. 5-10 minutes - Reflection - Ask the students to list different types of questions. Which ones seemed the most effective? Why? Can some questions be prepared in advance? How would that be beneficial in a debate?

**Informal Assessment Strategies**:

Monitor group dynamics. Students will need to be taking notes while the speaker is talking and write down their questions. Collect their notes at the end and review for engagement.

**Formal Assessment Strategies**:

This activity is designed to be a daily, participation drill. No formal assessment needed.

**Reflection/Review for Future**:

Students usually enjoy the active engagement. Depending on class size this may need to be continued or repeated so that all students can have a chance to participate.