**MS Big Questions - Lesson #9**

**Unit Name**: Debate Drills

**Topic**: Thinking on Your Feet

**Essential Questions**:

1. Question 1 - Why is it important to think quickly on your feet in a debate round?
2. Question 2 - How can this skill be developed?

**Objectives**:

1. Objective 1 - Pose and respond to specific questions (and statements) with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.
2. Objective 2 - Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

**Instructional Materials Needed**:

* Sample Affirmative and/or Negative Constructive cases from the NSDA website
* Students should have written their constructive speeches for Big Questions prior to this lesson

**References**:

None.

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

Students can practice impromptu speaking, a vital skill in debate rounds and in life. This lesson plan is best to be used after students have read through the topic analysis and have written affirmative and negative cases.

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

10 minutes – Overview of Lesson

1. Teacher offers overview of lesson by asking students what is meant by “thinking on your feet” and why that would be a useful skill in debate and in life.
2. Explain “On the Other Hand Activity”. Students will break into groups of 5 and start with a statement, for example: “Winter is my favorite season because of the long break.” The person next to her/him in the circle then begins with “On the other hand, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_“ supplying a counterpoint to any part of the previous statement. So, the second person could change the season, the modifier, or the reason in this example. The goal is to get the students to realize that changing any part of the previous statement serves as a way to change the conversation. It is an example of impromptu refutation. Students should go around the circle twice giving impromptu refutations to the statement.

5 minutes - “On the Other Hand” Example with Class

1. Before breaking students up into groups practice together as a class. Start with a simple statement like “Winter is my favorite season because of the long break”. Ask for volunteers to give an impromptu refutation.
2. A series might look like this:

Winter is my favorite season because of the long break.

On the other hand, winter is my least favorite season because it’s too cold.

On the other hand, summer is my favorite season because there is an even longer break.

On the other hand, spring is my favorite season because it’s not too hot yet.

10 minutes- “On the Other Hand” in groups

1. Break Students into groups of 5 for them to try the activity on their own. Here are other simple statements you can begin with:
   1. American Idol is the best singing competition show because it’s the longest running.
   2. Superman is the best superhero because he can fly.
   3. Red Bull is my favorite energy drink because it has the best slogan.
   4. Dogs are my favorite animal because I can play outside with them.
   5. The Yankees are the best baseball team because they’ve won the most World Series.

20 minutes – On the Other Hand with Big Questions

1. Using the affirmative or negative sample case for the 2017-2018 Big Questions topic write out the contentions in the case (listed below). Ask for volunteers to give an impromptu refutation to one of the contentions. After you have 2-3 impromptu refutations per contention break students up into groups of five for the “On the Other Hand Activity”. Ask them to use one of their contentions from either their affirmative or negative case to start. The activity should follow the same format as the first time. Have students complete the activity with 2-3 contentions (depending on time).
   1. Affirmative Case
      * 1. Human culture, or the process of differentiating oneself through interactions with your social environment, is what separates humanity from other forms of animality.
      1. 2. Humans differ fundamentally from other animals due to their ability to think rationally.
   2. Negative Case
      * 1. All capabilities possessed by humans can be explained through acquired traits from prior forms, meaning their underlying characteristics are fundamentally similar.
        2. The traits regarded as fundamentally human are actually extensions of non-fundamental traits, and thus should be regarded as fundamental similarities.

5 minutes - Reflection

Guide the students in a discussion of what constituted more successful impromptu comments and speeches. Discuss ways that they can continue to develop this skill in other situations. Conclude by asking how they might use impromptu speaking more effectively in debate rounds.

**Informal Assessment Strategies**:

Walk around and observe to ensure students are participating.

**Formal Assessment Strategies**:

None needed.

**Reflection/Review for Future**:

This activity can be repeated with different cases throughout the year.