

Speaking Activity

Topic: (Situations) Debate about whether the death penalty should be abolished or not.

Time: 50 minutes

Target Students:

Students who are at the advanced Chinese level and have learned related vocabulary.

Goal:

1. Provide students with an activity to practice their speaking skills, especially how to use specific examples to express their own opinions about this topic in Chinese.
2. Review vocabulary on what they have learned in Lesson Four 司马迁和<史记> (The textbook is Advanced Chinese for Humanities, the author is Zhirong Wang, Columbia University)

Procedure:

Preparation - Three or four days before the day of this activity:

Step1:

Divide students into two groups by drawing lots. Group 1, the affirmative, stands by the statement that the death penalty should be abolished; Group 2, the negative, stands by the statement that the death penalty should not be abolished. Each group has 3-4 students (depending on the amount of students in the class).

If there are 9 or more students, the teacher can let the leftover students represent the jury. The jury should prepare at least 2 questions for Group 1 and Group 2 respectively. The jury should also question Group 1 and Group 2 during the debate and make comments on their argument..

Step2:

Send students emails or handouts about the debate process (as the following diagram illustrates) and related vocabulary list (废除、死刑、刑罚、减免、惩罚、刑法、监狱、犯罪、罪犯、关、罪行、杀死、法官、判刑、同意、支持、赞成、反对). Students can ask for help from teachers if they need.

Step3:

Group 1 and Group 2 arrange their own meetings and discuss how to prepare for the debate.

Step4:

The teacher prepares the evaluation forms for the debate and some small gifts (Chinese postcards etc.). In addition, the teacher can invite two co-workers or language associates to be the jury if no student represents the jury.

On the day of this activity (this activity may be held during the last class of the week or the drill session):

Step1: (5 minutes)

Let the two groups and the jury sit in a U shape and let them introduce themselves.

Step2: (32 minutes)

The debate begins in order. The teacher sets up a timer and makes notes or video recording if allowed.

Round 1: Constructive speech	The first speaker of the affirmative	1.5 minutes
	The first speaker of the negative	1.5 minutes
Round 2: Presentation of evidence or examples.	The second speaker of the negative	2 minutes
	The second speaker of the affirmative	2 minutes
Round 3: Half-controlled questioning	The third speaker of the affirmative answers questions from the negative	2.5 minutes
	The third speaker of the affirmative answers questions from the negative	2.5 minutes
Round 4: Questioning period	The affirmative gives the first question, and the rebuttals alternate: negative, affirmative, negative, affirmative until time is up.	4 minutes for the affirmative and the negative respectively
Round 5: Closing speech	The fourth speaker of the negative	2 minutes
	The fourth speaker of the affirmative	2 minutes
Round 6: Questions and comments from the jury	Any speaker may another questions if the jury does not mention a specific speaker to answer.	8 minutes

Step 3: (about 5 minutes)

The teacher makes comments, then discusses with the jury to decide the winning team and the best speaker.

Step 4: (about 8 minutes)

Let speakers express their opinion on this debate and share the process they used in preparing for the debate.

Step 5:

After the class, the teacher sends each student an email with detailed feedback (including pronunciation, grammar, logic etc.) if the teacher has enough time.

Expected Outcome:

1. Students can fluently and coherently express their opinions about this topic in Chinese.
2. Students master the usage of related vocabulary.
3. Students have a sense of accomplishment when they use Chinese to debate.

Feedback:

(I have not conduct this activity yet. So I do not have the feedback from students. Looking forward to your feedback about the design.)