



EARTHE

Activity 2

Digital toolkit for innovative curriculum and methodological development

Module 1 – Growth mindset

Method 4 – Structured debates

Case study



Module 1 – Growth Mindset

Case study - Practical Application of Structured Debates in Non-Formal Adult Learning

Related Method - Structured Debates

Context and Background

Organisation: A non-formal adult education centre focusing on lifelong learning.

Target Group: Adult learners from diverse backgrounds, including professionals seeking to enhance their critical thinking and communication skills.

Scope: The programme aimed to integrate structured debates into the curriculum to foster analytical thinking and articulate expression.

Problem / Challenge Presented

The adult learners showed only limited participation in discussions and found it difficult to present clear, well-structured arguments. Such reduced level of critical engagement limited their capacity to analyse complex issues and to communicate effectively—skills that are vital in both personal and professional settings.

Actions Taken / Method Applied

The educators introduced Structured Debates as a pedagogical strategy. This method involved:

- a) Choosing relevant and thought-provoking issues.
- b) Allowing time for research and understanding of both sides of the argument.
- c) Organising debates with clear roles and time limits to ensure focused discussions.
- d) Encouraging participants to reflect on their performance and the perspectives encountered.

This approach aimed to promote critical thinking, active listening, and the ability to construct and deconstruct arguments.



Outcomes and Results

As a result of applied structured debates, the participants:

- became more skilled at analysing issues from multiple viewpoints.
- Increased the clarity and persuasiveness of their arguments.
- became more active in discussions, showing greater interest in diverse perspectives.

These outcomes contributed to a more dynamic learning environment and better-prepared individuals for real-world challenges.

Lessons Learned

1. Being well prepared is essential. Adequate time for research and understanding both sides of an argument is essential for effective participation.
2. Clear roles and time limits help maintain the quality and focus of debates.
3. Taking time to reflect after a debate strengthens both learning and personal growth.

Key Success Factors

Selecting issues relevant to the learners' lives and interests increases engagement.

Creating a safe space for expression encourages participation.

Experienced moderators ensure balanced participation.

Challenges Encountered and How They Were Addressed

Some learners hesitated in the beginning, feeling apprehensive about public speaking.

Solution: Gradual introduction of debate elements and supportive coaching helped build confidence.

Certain individuals tended to dominate discussions, without allowing much space for others to contribute..

Solution: Implementing structured turns and encouraging quieter participants to share their views ensured balanced participation.

Applicability / Recommendations for Educators

Debates can be used to address current issues, encouraging learners to engage critically.

It could be beneficial to offer workshops on debate techniques and argument construction.



EARTHE

It would be good to promote active listening and respect for different opinions to enhance learning outcomes.

By adopting structured debates, educators can cultivate key skills in adult learners, preparing them for informed decision-making and effective communication in various aspects of the learning process.