



EARTHE

Activity 2

Digital toolkit for innovative curriculum and methodological development

Module 1 – Growth mindset

Method 4 – Structured debates

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Method 4. - Structured Debates

Soft skill focus

This method fosters critical thinking, openness to diverse perspectives, and the ability to adapt arguments in light of new information. These are all essential skills for cultivating a growth mindset.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this activity, learners will be able to:

- Present and defend ideas clearly and respectfully.
- Demonstrate openness to revising their perspective when presented with compelling evidence.
- Listen actively to opposing viewpoints and identify underlying reasoning.
- Apply growth mindset principles to constructive disagreement and collaborative problem-solving.

Target group

Age: 20+ (adult learners)

Gender: All

Level of studies: Secondary education, vocational training, or higher education

Status: Employed / unemployed / seeking employment

Fewer opportunities: Valuable for individuals lacking confidence in public speaking, critical dialogue, or collaborative decision-making.

Structured debates are particularly effective for learners who need to practice articulating and refining their views without becoming defensive or dismissive.

Method description

Structured debates assign participants to opposing sides of a statement or question, encouraging them to research, prepare, and present arguments while actively engaging



with counterarguments. This method develops flexible thinking and resilience in the face of intellectual challenge.

Implementation instructions

Timeline: 90 minutes (including preparation and discussion).

No. of participants: 8–20 learners.

Necessary materials: Debate topic statements, timer, debate rules handout, pens, flip chart or digital board.

Space: Classroom, training room, or online meeting platform with breakout rooms

Implementation in 5 steps

Step 1 – Introduce Debate Structure and Purpose

Facilitator explains the debate format, rules, and time limits, emphasising respectful engagement and the role of growth mindset in listening to and learning from opposing viewpoints.

Step 2 – Assign Positions and Teams

Participants are divided into two teams: “For” and “Against” the debate statement. Roles (e.g., opening speaker, rebuttal speaker, closing speaker) are assigned within each team.

Step 3 – Preparation

Teams research and prepare arguments, anticipating possible counterarguments. Facilitator circulates to support critical thinking and ensure a respectful tone.

Step 4 – Conduct the Debate

Each team presents its opening statements, rebuttals, and closing arguments, following the agreed structure. Audience members (if any) observe and note examples of adaptability, evidence use, and respectful engagement.

Step 5 – Reflection and Mindset Link

After the debate, participants reflect on whether their views shifted, what they learned from the opposing side, and how they handled disagreement. Facilitator connects these insights to growth mindset principles.



Practical tips

Tip 1 – Choose debate topics that are challenging but not personally offensive to participants.

Tip 2 – Remind participants that “winning” is less important than learning from the exchange.

Tip 3 – Include a reflection step immediately after the debate to cement mindset learning.

Debriefing questions

Question 1 – Did you encounter any arguments that changed or expanded your perspective?

Question 2 – How did you handle moments when you felt strongly opposed to the other side?

Question 3 – In what ways did you apply growth mindset principles during the debate?

Practical description sheet

Title: Structured Debates – Growth Mindset

Purpose: To develop openness, adaptability, and constructive communication by engaging in respectful, evidence-based debates.

Duration: 90 minutes

Format: Two opposing teams, structured roles, timed arguments

Core Steps: Introduce → Assign positions → Prepare → Debate → Reflect

Materials: Debate topics, rules handout, timer, flip chart/digital board

Key Benefits: Encourages flexible thinking, strengthens argumentation skills, promotes active listening.