

Katrin Schultze
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin,
Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Abteilung Fachdidaktik Englisch
katrin.schultze@hu-berlin.de

Debating Contest 2022 – Observations and Impressions by a Seminar Group from Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Thanks to the openness and hospitality of organizers and participants, 11 students and I (Katrin Schultze) got the chance to get involved into this year's debating contest. The students are future teachers of English, in their last year at university, and participants in my seminar "Argumentieren im (hybriden) Englischunterricht: Methoden, Theorien, Forschungsansätze". In the seminar, we looked into different pedagogical conceptualisations of argumentative competence and tried to develop new (online) methods to foster such competences. In this context, it was extremely interesting for us to witness a complex argumentative format such as debating being put into practice.

4 students and I took part as adjudicators, 7 students as observers. All of us were deeply impressed by the high-level performances of both juniors and seniors. Students seemed very well trained in building and delivering their arguments and also showed a lot of flexibility and quick-wittedness in making and tackling points of information. Thus, they managed to stage really thrilling, two-sided and profound debates on interesting and up-to-date motions, which some of us even carried home and continued with friends and family members.

For us as adjudicators, it was admittedly quite a challenge to follow the debate and take evaluative notes at the same time, and some of us would have wished for a little more time to agree on the final judgement. But with the help of the more experienced adjudicators, we felt that well-grounded and fair judgements could always be reached. As observers, we were also thrilled by how well everyone mastered the online setting. Except for a few little disturbances, things seemed to work smoothly, and some debating teams even managed to make use of further online tools, besides wonder.me, in order to communicate amongst each other during the debates – wow!

With the agreement of everyone involved, three of the debates were being recorded and will be analysed for argumentative patterns/structures during the summer semester. Thanks again for making this possible.