

## UNIT 5 CULMINATING ACTIVITY: PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE DEBATES

### (ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING)

Hold two debates with the entire class, or divide the class into two groups with each group debating one topic.

#### Debate topics:

1. Alternative medicine: science or pseudo-science?
2. Should non-scientists have a role in controlling science funding?

#### Preparation:

- Research alternative medicine (e.g., acupuncture, homeopathy, aromatherapy, etc.).
- Research how the National Research Council Canada administers research funds. Where do elected politicians or appointees from the public enter into the funding process?

#### Setting up the debates:

1. If you divide the class into two groups to hold separate debates, the group not debating must be active listeners instead of passive spectators. The active listening group will record (video or audio) the other debate and transcribe or chart the main arguments that come out in the debate. Be prepared to say what the debaters missed as potential material or lines of argument for the debate. Afterwards, in the debriefing session, describe how you saw and scored the other group's debate.
2. After doing preliminary research, develop a concise motion for each debate. A motion must be an affirmative statement, such as: *Be it resolved that OHIP will fund alternative medicine in addition to mainstream health care.*
3. Divide the class into *side proposition* (for) and *side opposition* (against). It is the duty of *side proposition* (i.e., the Government or the House in Parliamentary debate) to further define the motion: for example, *We interpret the motion to mean that acupuncture and other holistic practices ... will be funded (as opposed to anything).* If the motion is defined too tightly or too broadly, the debate will not run well.
4. One or more student(s) will moderate the debate, thus freeing up your teacher to track who is speaking. The moderator should remain neutral and work to bring out new information and speakers in the debate. They can encourage others to get into the debate by politely asking those who have already spoken to take a back seat for a while.
5. For the alternative-medicine debate, try using an inner and outer circle, sometimes called the bear pit. Have three students from each team go into the pit with the two moderators there to keep order. After those three students have had a chance to speak, students from the outer circle replace those on the inside by tapping them on the shoulder. Don't tap out people inside the circle who didn't get to speak yet, or return too often to the circle and shut out others. The added physical activity can be intense but fun!



## BLM 13.1 Continued

6. Closing speeches are traditional in debates. But another way of closing is to have each person say one thing as you go around the circle, giving everyone a voice if they wish to use it.

### Assessing the debate:

Use the following rubric to understand how your work in the debate will be assessed.

Category	PROPOSITION	OPPOSITION
<b>knowledge</b>	/10	/10
Content		
Points of Information (using directed questions to advance your own cause and add information)		
<b>thinking</b>	/10	/10
Analysis		
Refutation and Rebuttal (countering moves)		
<b>communication</b>	/10	/10
Organization		
Presentation		
<b>application</b>	/10	/10
Argumentation		
<b>Score</b>	/40	/40
<b>Winner</b>		

### Debriefing (post-mortem):

Discuss how the debate went. Did key ideas come out or were the ideas lost in rhetoric and theatrics? Where did you see critical thinking in action, and how does this exemplify practical wisdom—Aristotle's idea of *phronesis* (see textbook page 295)?

