

TEACHING TODAY'S LEARNERS #13



Pop-Up Debate

The What:

Pop-up Debate is a method for engaging students in active learning and facilitating in-class discussions and debates. Pop-Up Debates are modified to fit a variety of curricula; students can easily learn and internalize this process with practice and apply it to many different situations.

The How:

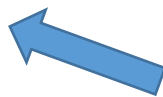
Students use a content material or text to respond to a debatable prompt provided by the teacher. Use the guidelines below to facilitate:

- 1) Set a time limit based on student needs. Every student should speak at least once.
- 2) To participate, a student “pops-up” at their desk and begins speaking. Whoever is standing has the floor. When multiple students pop-up, lessons can be given on respectfully yielding the floor. Students quickly learn these debates are a collaborative endeavor.

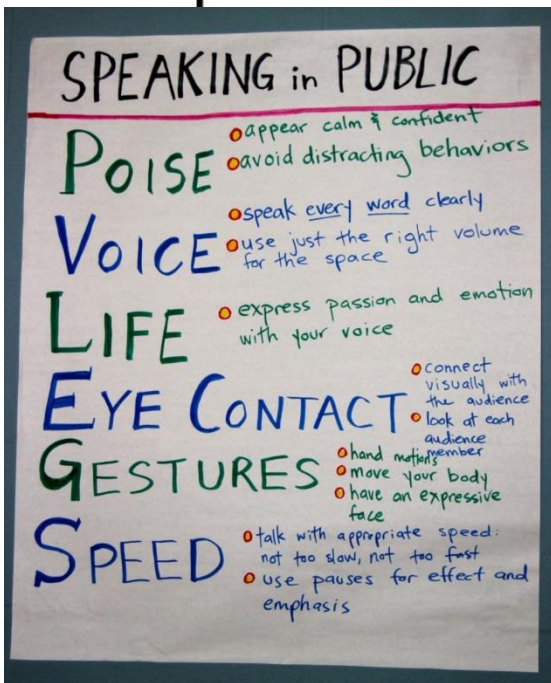
The Why:

- 1) Gets all students active, listening, and speaking about your content.

- 2) Teaches students to argue appropriately, an essential life skill and a critical part of being college and career ready.
- 3) Explicitly teaches students how to speak and listen within an authentic context.



Erik Palmer has a [whole site devoted to PVLEGS](#), but here's the gist: PVLEGS is Palmer's way of simplifying how we teach and assess speaking. He claims we should give kids the gift of authentic speaking experience as much as possible.



Pop-Up Debate: Management Considerations

~Ideas from David Stuart Jr.~

- Explain Palmer's PVLEGS and use it all year long.
- No cross talking. The person standing has the floor to speak.
- Be the coach in the room – model, instruct, encourage and correct as students need.
- Teach and assess 1-2 skills at a time. You could organize your mini-lessons into three buckets: content, organization, delivery.
- Use the mantra – “We all win great debates.” Don't choose winners.
- Teach students to see both sides of an issue by assigning sides once and a while – good debaters can debate from all sides.
- Include a reflection after the conclusion of the debate (Plus/Delta works well here – What went well? What didn't? What needs to be improved? How?)
- Use debate frequently to help students internalize the process.
- Each student should plan to speak. Be more proactive and scaffold this process more thoroughly with shy students.
- Mix it up! Use this as a tool to assist students in getting into more content depth.