

Debate Higher

A collaborative programme for KS3 high attaining students from disadvantaged backgrounds to develop their own oracy skills and further embed oracy throughout their schools

The issue

In order to be successful at GCSE the ability to form, sustain and substantiate a point of view is key but many students lack these skills, particularly those students who may not have the social opportunities to develop them. In response to approaches from a number of schools and the discussion held amongst the 'Supporting More Able students to apply to Competitive Courses group', Aimhigher London proposed a model of working through the format of an inter school debate.

Aims

This programme offers year 8/9 learners in Aimhigher Partnership schools:

- the opportunity to develop methods of effective communication;
- the opportunity of learning and practising high standards of expression, argument and presentation;
- an incentive to formulate ideas on topical subjects;
- experience in speaking on a public platform as a member of a team;
- the opportunity to work with representatives from a range of universities to develop oracy and life skills

The Programme (September 2018 – July 2019)

Aimhigher coordinates a sustained collaborative programme of six interventions delivered at six different university campuses by partner HEIs who are leaders in their field, including a launch and final debate session.

Aimhigher complement these sessions by offering in-school visits to re-inforce oracy skills learnt.

The programme culminates in an inter school Great Debate at the Houses of Parliament on 4th July with the theme of 'Independence'

University interventions take place half termly from autumn and last two -two and a half hours, 1.30/2pm – 4:00pm The debate will take place at the end of summer term 2 (post exams).

HE sessions **introduce** students to the themes of:

- 1) Ethics and morals (truthful arguments and principles)
- 2) Argument and persuasion (eg Moot Court)
- 3) Media and communication (fake news, language, social media)
- 4) Performance and Presentation (theatre and voice, confidence, audience)

	Autumn term 1	Autumn term 2	Spring term 1	Spring term 2	Summer term 1	Summer term 2
Carshalton Boys' Sports College	Introduction and launch to project and debating Kingston University	Session 1 'Argument & Persuasion' Roehampton University	Session 2 'Ethics & Morals' RVC	Session 3 'Media & Comms' Goldsmiths University	Session 4 'Performance & Presentation' St Marys University	'The Great Debate' SOAS
Rivers Academy						
Southborough School						
Springwest Academy						
University Academy of Engineering						

Embedding oracy and life skills – Expectations of Schools

Schools are encouraged to develop a whole school approach to oracy. Learners are encouraged to establish/enhance their debating society in their school and to share their experiences of the programme via peer to peer learning supported by university ambassadors. Aimhigher and partner universities develop the resources to do so.

Aimhigher require a link teacher in the school who can take the project forward, organise the logistics and support the pupils to embed the oracy skills throughout the school so that as many pupils as possible can benefit.

Who is it for?

The Aimhigher Debate Higher project has been offered initially to 50 students from a pilot group of 5 schools across the partnership.

Schools were invited to select 10 students from year 8 or 9 who:

- Come from a widening participation background (ie PPG, FSM , first generation to access HE, live in an area of low participation in HE)
- have the potential to progress to high tariff universities and courses, given their academic attainment;
- would benefit from the opportunity to increase their social cultural capital and boost their 'social' confidence;
- will be committed to the course of the programme and with support could disseminate ideas to their peers

Evaluation

Aimhigher is evaluating the programme using the fundamental principles of the University of Cambridge evaluative oracy framework which supports the development of physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional skills.