

“Assessing elements which facilitate successful learning outcomes: Using Worlds Universities Debate as a lens to examine elements which facilitate motivation and 21st century learning outcomes in Cameroon and China”

Mariel Golden, Alfred Snider

Speech Department

Abstract

This study seeks to understand the motivation of students. This qualitative study examined two main areas and had one essential goal for future application. Firstly, this research tried to understand what motivated students to begin and continue to pursue university debate. Secondly, this research tried to identify components intrinsic to the university debating experience in the regions of Cameroon and China and furthermore understand why students valued those components. More broadly this research tried to gain student centered insight about elements necessary to facilitate meaningful and productive educational experiences. The participants in this study were 43 university students from the countries of Cameroon and China. Students were interviewed about their choice to participate in debate and the benefits they received from that participation. The interviews revealed that students from these regions were motivated to learn English. Student were also motivated to develop critical thinking skills. Many of those interviewed reported that debate was able to teach them how to analyze and led them to see multiple sides to issues. The experiences reported by some students addressed resource problems that made it difficult to compete in debate. The findings suggest that future partnerships bringing debate training to areas developing debate program could help increase participation and access to debate as an activity. Moreover, it was strongly suggested that motivation to participate in debate was linked to the fact that debate taught skills to students they perceived would lead to their success. Debate was largely seen as a teaching tool by students in Cameroon and China.