Think Aloud!
Empowering Achievement: Using Debate to Build Student Achievement in Western Academic Settings

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Does debate as a Western instructional method empower (some) Chinese students?
This Presentation

What is a pedagogy of empowerment?

What do Chinese students want to be empowered to do?

What is a Western style education and what is debate’s role in it?

The one year history of the China debate program

An evaluation of the program

Thoughts on my experience

Suggestions for moving forward
The Pedagogy of Empowerment

Pedagogy: Instructional methods/teaching methods/HOW we teach
Empowerment: Improving your life

The pedagogy of empowerment concerns how instructional methods can work to impact the individuals who are exposed to them to in a way that increases the capacity and likelihood that those individuals will improve their own lives and potentially the lives of other individuals around them.
US Universities

- Admitted to
  - 2010-11: 56,000
  - 2012-13: 94,000
- The best universities

- Succeed in them
  - Learn how US students learn
  - Apply creative methods to new businesses and products
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"It's an idea whose time has come," said Matthew Benjamin Farthing, headmaster of the newly opened Harrow International School in Beijing. "As the world is globalizing, it's only natural for education to globalize. Parents everywhere want the best education and while they once had to send their children to places like Harrow in the UK or US, schools like Harrow are now coming here."

"I think the reputation of where you study [shapes] your own reputation," said Peng Di, 21, who really wants to study at the Johns Hopkins University’s Chinese campus in eastern Nanjing city. But it's also the promise of being prepped for life in a Westernized world and studying in an environment that emphasizes all-round development and not academics alone, as Chinese schools tend to do, that attracts locals. Getting admission to top Chinese schools is exceedingly competitive, and the schools' orientation is heavily academic. So parents with means looking to turn their children into global citizens look favorably at schools such as Harrow, which teach in English and take a wider approach to education.

China’s Educational Model

Teacher centered (professorial)

Factory model (disciplined, passive classroom)

Large class
China’s New Debate Program

1,000+ students enrolled in classes in 17 schools

4 tournaments held to date, at least 13 more by May

More than 500 students have competed in tournaments

500-600 expected to attend Harvard Summer Camps
Problems of China’s Model

The *Gaokao* is China's national educational test, given to 10 million secondary students to determine their rank and placement at university. The top scorers become national celebrities. But critics say that the test's emphasis on memorization, fact recall and processing speed can determine college admissions too arbitrarily. "I did not feel well the day of the test," one recent graduate told us. "As a result I placed in the top 10%, not good enough to get into the C9. I felt like my life was over." (Silverstein & Sing, 2012).

A Dean at a major Chinese university explained in an interview that, "Chinese students can swarm a problem...But when it comes to original thought and invention, we stumble. We are trying hard to make that up. We are trying to make technical education the grounding from which we solve problems" (Silverstein & Singh, 2012).
December 2011 – First Visit

7 days, 5 cities, 5 schools

Wuxi No. 1 School (Wuxi),
Nanjing Foreign Language School
Hangzhou Foreign Language School
Shenzhen Foreign Language School
Shanghai World Foreign Languages School.
January 2012 – Montgomery Bell

Dipont VP sees debate for the first time

Hatch a business plan

Meeting with Scott Wunn
February-March – Camp,
Development of Debate in China
May 2012 – Teacher Training

100 teachers

Sponsored/funded by Dipont

Dr. Anand Rao, Dr. Ryan Galloway, Adam Jacobi
May 2012 Teacher Training
May 2012 Teacher Training

Presentation by Zhou Jianhua
-- Society for Cultivating Innovators

Promote Debate Education and Cultivate Innovative Talents

周建华（Zhou Jianhua）创新人才教育研究会常务副会长
Executive Vice President of the Society for Cultivating Innovators

人大附中 教授/数学特级教师/副校长
Professor/ National Special-grade Mathematician
Deputy Principal of RDFZ
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论辩教育的涵义
(The Meaning of the Education for Academic Debate)

• 论辩教育是指学校教育者有意识地通过论辩式的方法、媒介等形式向学生传递信息，期望以此影响学生的精神世界或心理状态，帮助或阻碍学生获得某种（些）观念、素质、能力的社会活动方法。

• The debate education model is a social activity method aimed at helping or blocking students to acquire some views, qualities and abilities through transferring information to students, and imposing influence on the mental state of students by debate method and media modes.
辩论学是一门古老的科学和艺术
(Forensic is an Ancient Science and Art)

- 在中国古代先秦时期曾辩风甚炽，以至出现了先秦时期“百家争鸣”的局面，一大批口若悬河、游说四方的辩士应运而生。
- During the Qin Dynasty of ancient China, the influence and popularity of debate was so strong that there even emerged the situation of “hundreds of schools of thoughts contending each other”. A large number of debaters who could lobby emerged as time required.)
辩论学是一门古老的科学和艺术 (Forensic is an Ancient Science and Art)

• 而辩论的激情在以“雅典的牛至”自识的苏格拉底身上表现得更为淋漓尽致。在与人无休止的争辩中，他总结出“教育应在交谈中揭示真理，通过交流使人信服”的教学方法论。

• The passion for debate had been shown even more thoroughly in Socrates who boasted with “Athens oregano”. In the endless debate with people, he concluded the teaching methodology that "education should reveal the truth via conversation and should convince people through exchanges".
辩论的功能（Functions For Rhetoric）

• 作为古希腊贤哲的集大成者，亚里士多德进一步阐述了辩论术的四种功能：（Aristotle listed four functions for rhetoric：）

• 1. 辩论阻止欺骗和邪恶行为得逞。
  (First, it prevents the triumph of fraud and injustice.)

• 2. 辩论是一种教育公众的方法。
  (Second, rhetoric is a method of instruction for the public.)

• 3. 辩论使人们看到一个问题的正反两个方面。
  (Third, rhetoric makes us see both sides of a case.)

• 4. 辩论是保护自我利益和个人名誉的防御手段。
  (Fourth, rhetoric is a means of defense to protect ourselves and our interests.)
论辩的作用
（The Role of Debate）

- 如，哥白尼的“日心说”，达尔文的“物种起源”理论，爱因斯坦的“相对论”，威廉·哈维的“血液循环”理论等，都无不经过“辩论”的反复考验。
- For example, Copernicus's Heliocentric Theory, Darwin's Origin of Species Theory, Einstein's Theory of Relativity, William Harvey's Blood Circulation Theory, have all been through the tests of debate repeatedly.
- “真理愈辩愈明”，人类关于主客观世界的认识能力，也正是在实践中、在“辩论”的锤炼中一步步获得提高的。
- "The truth can be more and more convincing through debate". Human cognitive ability on subjective and objective world has also been improving through the practice of debate.
HDC Summer Workshops -- July

122 students

15 instructors for 1:8

Lectures, lab, group of 8, and individual instruction from a variety of instructors

tournament
China should increase its use of nuclear power.
想，想……想，我从未想过。
Program Develops – August 2012

5 Experienced Coaches Head to China
Debate Classes Begin – 1,000 students
December 2012

Four tournaments – Nanjing, Ningbo, Beijing, Shanghai

Well-organized, well-executed
Students struggle with loss

Approx. 400 students debate
Debater Waiting Room
National High School Academic Debate
Choosing a Waiting Room

National High School Academic Debate Tournament

Debater Waiting Room
All of the students checked that they joined the program to “learn how to debate and argue.” Twenty-two also checked that they chose to participate in the course to “enhance college admissions prospects” and seventeen checked that those chose debate to “enhance college admissions prospects to a US university.”
Student Reviews and Skills

Confidence
Commitment
Initiative
Active Learning
Confidence

Thirteen of the surveyed students indicated that debate helped them improve their confidence. One debater noted that debate helped him become “more confident” when he “argue(d)” and another said it helped him be “confident speak (to) out loud.” Yet another said she would be “less nervous or tense when there is another opportunity to speak out.” One student specifically noted that debate makes him “more confident in exchanging ideas in English” and another noted that it helped her “overcome stage fright.”
Commitment & Initiative

Three students noted that debate improved their overall sense of initiative and commitment. One student also noted how the overall learning experience motivated him: “I used to have no motivation to study, but now I do. I want to go to a wonderful university, and I want a learning life in an ancient building full of the atmosphere and knowledge. This is my goal. To achieve this, I have to work harder and not waste a minute. This might be the power of will, which I got from debate at Harvard.”
Active Learning

- Active learning focuses on the responsibility of the learner in the learning process and engaging in cooperative learning, including dialogue with self, dialogue with others, observing, and doing.
Dialogue with the self includes critical thinking – thinking reflexively about topics, including what a person ought to think about a topic, and includes self-evaluation of the thinking. Four students noted that debate improved their critical thinking skills. One of them noted that debate encouraged her to “try to come up with answers to arguments on her own based on what she knew.” Another said that her participation encouraged her to “think about solutions to problems that will work.”
Dialogue with others involves “intense” discussion about the issue at hand. Two students said that debate helped them improve their ability to work with another person (their partner) and four noted that debate helped them with working in groups. One student noted “(D)ebate is a kind of team work. You cannot do debate only by yourself, so you need to know how to categorize with others and organizes others to solve problems.”
General Empowerment

- “I think being a good debater gives me confidence to speak out in my debate opinion, and it will help me believe in myself that I can also persuade someone with my own voice, and that makes me more optimistic;”
- “Debate helps me think of one problem in a lot of different sides and I think that this will help people be more responsible of your action by also knowing the disadvantage and the advantage at the same time;”
- “I hope to get leadership in the class, because I lack self-confidence. Knowledge and skills of persuading which are all very important elements of leadership.”
The Evidence

Anecdotal self-report evidence
Consistent with other evidence and research
Needs to expand beyond one class
Other academic an extra/co curricular experience
Questions could use design improvement
A true diagnostic would be better
Distinguish HDC participants from class
Thoughts on the Program

Academic institution with a highly recognized brand

Highly reputable academic organization

A private, for profit actor

Support of the government

Integration of the schools

Format choices
Thoughts on the Program

Kids want to debate
  1,000 in class, more than 500 debating
  400 more expected to enroll in class in March
  10,000/year expected to debate within 3 years
  15 more full-time coaches and teachers
Moving Forward

Advanced levels

Learn from what has been done

A program for students who do not debate

Prepare coaches who are moving to China