

Teaching Middle Schoolers

1. the middle school kids LOVE games as part of their instruction

- The "I disagree game" – put kids into two lines facing each other—student makes an argument—student across from them needs to make a response.
- The "Who speaks the most passionately game" – have kids hold up signs for how passionately a speaker spoke—advance students to a finals and also have a "most improved" for a second round
- Etc.

2. "ARE" is big in middle school debate and is a fundamental that the kids should know. it is described in the "how to make a middle school case" but . . . still.

- **Assertion** (The "tag" – the main argument claim)
- **Reason** (The reason why that claim is true)
- **Evidence** (Proof--often, examples, statistics, expert opinion, study conclusion)
 - **Impact** is the next thing after "ARE" (the student explains in one concise sentence why the argument proves/disproves the case/resolution)

3. many of the best middle school teams have a "hook" as their intro sentence or two for their speeches. the hook is something that grabs the audience—like an attention getter/intro line in a good impromptu/oratory/expos.

USUALLY it is a question:

"Would you want your child taking multiple choice tests for day after day each quarter?"

"If you see a growing problem, is it really better to just do nothing about it?"

4. Be loud (very strong projection), respectful, very assertive and clear what you want from the students.

5. PREP your lectures . . .

-emphasize interaction—don't talk for more than 5 minutes before students do an activity

-emphasize them talking/doing and you speaking as little as possible

--start with an interesting intro—engage the kids; tell a good story; ask them a question—get some answers and then use those answers to bring them into your lecture

--write out the 4 key steps to do what you are talking about (keep them clear and concise)

--give an example of each step

--then have the kids do the 4 key steps

--as the kids do the 4 key steps, give feedback AND tell the kids to write down additional comments

Example Lecture:

YOU SAY: "when did you know you made a persuasive argument to your friends or your family?"

--Student raises hand and says "when I told them we could get ice cream if we went to the store" oh—why was that persuasive—"because they love ice cream"

YOU SAY: "Great, that is a great example of giving persuasive evidence—let's look at the 3 parts of an argument so that you can be persuasive

YOU SAY: ARE—assertion means . . . here is an example; reason means . . . here is an example; evidence means . . . here is an example

YOU SAY: I want you to come up with an ARE

YOU: give time for students to do their own AREs

YOU: now, each of you, present your ARE and while each student does—I want you to take notes of the argument (prepares them for flowing) AND write down ideas I give for making better arguments

YOU: as each student goes—give a "you did this well" and a "this is what you can improve on" –

example: you did a great job providing an expert source for your ARE:

"Everybody write down, Use expert sources to back up your ARE—for your evidence"

example: you need to make sure your reason is clearer (give specifics):

"Everybody write down, keep the reason concise and clear"