



10.4 Are You My Link?

This activity introduces disadvantage structure and components. It is also a good way to introduce the class to the shells and arguments of several, topic-related disadvantage scenarios. This activity should be completed before students are familiar with the disadvantage shells upon which the activity rests. It is a good way to introduce the core set of positions that the students might use or encounter at debate tournaments this year.

Time Allotment

This activity takes one class period or less.

Objectives

By the end of this activity, students will:

- be able to explain the structure of a disadvantage and how its components relate to one another.
- learn about several specific disadvantage scenarios that are relevant to this year's resolution.

Materials and Preparation

For this activity you will need to have multiple disadvantage shells. Disadvantage shells typically have somewhere between 3-5 cards. You will need enough shells so that there is one card for each student. If you have 30 students, but do not have the requisite 8-10 disadvantage shells, you may need to double up. In this situation, you will have multiple copies of certain disadvantages.

Once you have the appropriate number of photocopies of disadvantage shells, cut the cards out of the disadvantage shells, taking care to remove the tags but leave the cites. Once you have a pile of cards, shuffle the pile so that the cards are no longer in order.

Each group of students will also need access to a few sheets of briefing paper and some tape.

Method

Hand out a card to each student. Explain to the students that they each have one card and that the card they have is either the uniqueness, link, internal link or impact of a disadvantage scenario.

Once each student has a card, have them spend 3-4 minutes reading the card and outlining the content of the evidence on a separate sheet of paper. Next, have them write a hypothetical tag for their card.

Once each student has written a tag, tell the students that each of them needs to find the other students who have cards from the same disadvantage shell. Each student should mingle with her classmates, telling her counterparts what component of a disadvantage she has (a link, an impact, etc.) and what her evidence says. She should also listen to the same information from the other student and, together, they should decide whether or not it seems as though they have pieces of evidence from the same disadvantage shell.

Ask the students to put the component parts of a disadvantage together. Each student should talk to the other members of the class to find the missing link, uniqueness, and/or impact to their disadvantage. After



all the students have found their mates, have small groups present their disadvantage to the whole group.

Students should identify the students who have the other cards from their disadvantage. As a group, they should identify who has the uniqueness card, who has the link card, etc. They should then rewrite each of their tags. Then, they should call you over and have you confirm that they have found the right students to pair with (i.e. that they have all of the right cards and none of the wrong cards).

If you have so many students or so few disadvantage shells that you decided to double up (and use the same disadvantage twice), tell the students at the beginning of the activity that there are one (or however many) sets of doubles. Set rules for dealing with duplicates in advance. For instance, explicitly forbid students with the same card from being in the same group. Tell students that if she talks to a student that has the same card that she does, she needs to go and find another group of which to be a part.

Once you have confirmed that a set of students have gathered all of the necessary cards to have a complete shell (and that they don't have any unnecessary cards), those students can move onto the next phase of the activity. Ask all of the students to tape the cards onto sheets of briefing paper in the appropriate order. Then, have them rewrite the tag lines, for instance, "Link, the affirmative plan increases federal allocations towards environmental protection. Any increase in spending trades off with military spending." Once they have completed the shells, have the students write an overview.

Have the small groups prepare a 2-4 minute presentation explaining the disadvantage shell that they constructed. Have the student present the disadvantage scenarios. You may want to evaluate the quality and thoroughness of these presentations.

Variation:

This activity can be used with critique shells, negative solvency blocks, generic case turns, counterplan solvency cards, etc.