Educational and Ethical Dimensions of Debate

I. Educational Dimensions of Teaching Debate

A. Education and Competition

B. Educational Dimensions
   – Language and speaking
   – Critical thinking
   – Expanded perspectives

II. Ethical Dimensions of Teaching Debate

A. Ethics and Competition

B. Moral Purposes of Debate
   1. Communicating Responsibly
   2. Using Arguments to Resolve Disagreements
   3. Using an Adjudicator to Resolve Differences
   4. Reaching an Outcome to a Conflict

C. Ethical Guidelines for Debate

1. Employ ethical guidelines for the use of evidence.
2. Employ ethical guidelines for choosing arguments patterns.
3. Implement mutual equality.
4. Interact respectfully with others prior to, during, and after debates.
5. Champion clashes of ideas and reject personal attacks.
6. Engage the clash of ideas toward creating the most elevated, comprehensive, and well-reasoned arguments
7. Debate as a global citizen, active and participatory, toward generatively embracing vital issues.
Questions about Ethics for Discussion

• In what ways is each of the four essential features of debate important to the guidelines for ethical debate?

• Why do arguments in debates sometimes migrate away from the topic and toward the speakers themselves?

• Often debaters are called “opponents.” How is the term, “opponent,” problematic for ethical debaters? How might that term contribute to character attacks during debates? What other term might be more appropriate?

• Identify ways evidence or use of evidence might be clearly unethical. Why are they unethical?

• How is mutual equality signaled in a debate? What nonverbal cues might indicate one debater seems to perceive themselves as superior to another? Is that message about the issue or the speaker?

• Relate observed or experienced episodes of disagreement between debaters and adjudicators, episodes that generated difficulty. How might respect be shown in those circumstances?

• Is everyone a global citizen? Why would it be important for a debater to position himself or herself as a global citizen? What if the issue were a local issue? Are local issues related to global issues? Global issues to local issues?

• What problems arise if debaters choose to be unethical or not as ethical as they could be? How would these actions function in everyday life after college?