

Debate as a Recreational Activity to Improve Critical thinking in class 9th Students: A Review Paper

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Abstract

Debate as a recreational activity contributes to quality education by promoting critical thinking, active learning, and effective communication among students. Critical thinking is an important skill that helps students think carefully, understand ideas better, and make good decisions. For class 9th students, this skill is very important because they are at a stage where they start learning more difficult and advanced topics. One effective way to improve critical thinking is through debate. In a debate, students discuss a topic, give reasons, listen to others, and defend their ideas.

This review paper looks at five different studies that used debate as one of the recreational activities conducted in schools. All the studies show that debate helps students think better, speak more confidently, understand reading materials, and become more active in class. This paper also explains how these studies are useful for class 9th students and why debate should be used in schools to improve their critical thinking skills.

Keywords: Debate, Recreational Activity, Critical Thinking, Class 9th Students, Analytical skills, Reasoning Skills, Communication Skills, Active Learning, Quality Education

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1. Introduction

Critical thinking means thinking carefully before accepting any idea. It helps students understand information, ask good questions, compare different opinions, and find the best answer. For Class 9th students, critical thinking is very important because they start dealing with more complex lessons in subjects like Science, English, and Social Science, and they are also preparing for social interaction and their overall personality development.

Teachers today are encouraged to engage students in recreational activities that make students active and involved in learning. Debate is one such method. In a debate, students speak for or against a topic. They collect information, give strong reasons, listen to others, and reply to their points. This helps them learn how to think deeply, speak clearly, and understand different sides of an issue.

Class 9th students are at an age where they can understand difficult ideas and reason logically. That is why debate works very well for them. The research studies included in this review show that debate helps students improve their thinking, communication, reading, and confidence. This introduction sets the stage

for reviewing those studies and explaining how debate can be used to make learning better for Class 9th students. Thus, promoting critical thinking through debate can contribute to quality education by developing students' reasoning, communication, and active learning skills.

2. Purpose of the Review

This review paper aims to collect and synthesize existing research on debate as an instructional strategy, with a particular focus on understanding how debate improves students' critical thinking abilities. Specifically, it examines how debate can benefit Class 9th learners by enhancing their analytical, evaluative, and reasoning skills. Additionally, the review identifies gaps and limitations in previous studies that have not yet been adequately explored. Based on these findings, practical suggestions are offered for how schools and teachers can effectively implement debate-based activities to foster critical thinking in secondary stage classrooms.

3. Review of related studies

Ali & Souisa (2019) found that students who learned through debate techniques improved their speaking ability more than those who used group discussion. They also noticed that students with stronger critical thinking skills spoke much better than those with weaker thinking skills. Overall, debate and critical thinking worked well together to boost speaking performance.

Fuad, Ardana, Sulton & Kuswandi (2015) showed that classroom debate helped college students think more clearly and deeply. After several debate sessions, students became better at explaining their ideas, looking at problems from different angles, and drawing logical conclusions. The study confirmed that debate turns passive learners into active thinkers.

DanayeTous, Tahriri & Haghighi (2015) investigated whether debate could improve reading comprehension in English learners. They found that students who debated regularly understood reading texts much better than those who only listened to lectures. Both boys and girls benefited equally, and most students enjoyed debate because it made learning more active and engaging.

Handayani (2016) focused on how students use arguments, counter-arguments, and rebuttals during debate. She discovered that strong rebuttals need clear structure and real evidence, while weak ones rely on personal opinions like "I think" or "we can smell." Over time, students learned to back up their points with facts and expert opinions, which sharpened their critical thinking.

Yen & Hang (2022) worked with high school students in a debate club and found that debating activities greatly improved critical thinking. Students became better at communicating, analyzing problems, evaluating evidence, and reflecting on their own thinking. The researchers noted that debate made students more confident, motivated, and respectful of opposite views.

4. Implication of the study

For Class 9th students, debate is a powerful tool that builds critical thinking, speaking confidence, and reading comprehension during a key developmental stage. Research by Ali & Souisa (2019), DanayeTous, Tahriri & Haghighi (2015), Fuad et al. (2015), Handayani (2016), and Yen & Hang (2022) consistently shows that structured debate improves students' ability to analyze issues, evaluate evidence, and construct logical arguments. Class 9th learners benefit from explicit instruction on argument structure, simplified debate formats (e.g., 3-4 minute speeches), and age-appropriate, relatable motions tied to their textbooks. Debate also boosts speaking fluency and reduces anxiety about public speaking, while enhancing reading

comprehension across subjects. Students of all ability levels and genders improve with regular practice, and the vast majority find debate engaging and enjoyable. Teachers should act as facilitators, use clear rubrics, and provide sustained weekly sessions (6-10 weeks) for meaningful gains. Schools and parents should support debate as a core learning strategy, not just an occasional competition, to prepare Class 9th students for higher grades and real-world decision-making.

5. Inferences

Research shows debate is a reliable, hands-on, and engaging way to build critical thinking skills in middle and high school students. Compared to traditional teaching methods, debate produces better results, helps boys and girls alike, and also strengthens reading and speaking abilities. To get the most out of it, schools should make structured debate a regular part of classes, use simple scoring guides, and pick topics that are interesting and meaningful to students.

6. Conclusion

All the studies clearly show that debate is a highly effective activity for improving critical thinking in Class 9th students. It helps them understand topics better, express ideas clearly, and become confident learners. Debate also supports reading, speaking, and reasoning skills. Therefore, schools and teachers should use debate regularly to help students become strong thinkers and active participants in learning.

7. References

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