

Title: Argumentation and Debate in Foreign Language Instruction: A Case for the Traditional Classroom Facilitating Advanced Level Language Uptake

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Limited time allotted university foreign language classes, to a large degree, have fostered a scarcity mentality in the profession, which pins lack of learning on lack of time. Yet little has been written in recent years to discuss ways of working with rather than avoiding an otherwise imperfect system. This research seeks to present one possible method of facilitating foreign language uptake at the advanced level within the framework of an academic semester through the forums of British parliamentary style debate and Model United Nations.

In response to a growing demand for highly proficient speakers of foreign languages, both from the private and government sectors, an added emphasis has been placed on immersion-type programs that guarantee extensive time-on-task in a target language within a concentrated period of time. The US federally-funded National Flagship Language Program offers intensive language immersion in the target language and culture; the private sector offers additional options for foreign language immersion, including study abroad and summer language programs administered through universities. The common denominator linking each of these programs is an emphasis on time, i.e., more time in the target language correlates positively with more language uptake. While time in the target language certainly plays a valuable and needed role, this research seeks to demonstrate that innovative curricular design and development in the university foreign language classroom can equal, if not exceed, uptake that occurs in extended immersion environments. Rather than discounting the value of extended immersion programs, this research suggests that university foreign language curricula can and do impact significantly on students' learning at the Advanced level and can serve as an important springboard for those pursuing additional study in extended immersion programs.