<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>On Instrumental Possibilities of the Debate Communication Method for Students Majoring in Management, Economics or Related Social Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citation</td>
<td>東南アジア研究年報, (39), pp.71-77; 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue Date</td>
<td>1998-03-25</td>
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<tr>
<td>URL</td>
<td><a href="http://hdl.handle.net/10069/26554">http://hdl.handle.net/10069/26554</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

東南アジア研究年報

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On Instrumental Possibilities of the Debate Communication Method for Students Majoring in Management, Economics or Related Social Studies

Shigeru Uchida

1 Needs for Debate Communication

It would widely be predicted that many youths in universities and colleges become much more familiar with manipulating personal computers installed inter-net communication system for their studies on campus and even at home.

Recently, as is often pointed out, the circumstances of business and governmental activities have in general commenced to introduce quite a few kinds of computer-aided communication services, at least for the fulfillment of internal needs towards varied managerial objectives as well as the promotion of public relations with outside concerns including both domestic and foreign customers, NGOs, and so forth. Business and economic entities might today involve values of or value-added portion of services even contained in the production process of hardwares or visible goods.

Amongst services usually classified as private and public ones, intellectual elements of information, knowledge and others have had a dominant role in their estimation and evaluation of the economic performance. The more prevailed fully or partially automated machines with the so-called ME equipment we have, it should correctly be prepared for the better adjustments and coping more effectively with possible difficulties occurred in our daily life to prosecute on various stages of business and private affairs. This could surely become common even for school children to pursue their joyful and efficient class and after-school days with pleasure, but sometimes to the detriment of some of them, and communication with parents, teachers and friends.

When it comes to applied forensic studies and their cultivation, there have gradually been developed not a few items of fields in debate communication limited not merely in higher education but also in secondary education with certainly new contributions both to academic and business worlds. It would however be observed a steady incidence of changing some trends in classes confronting and welcoming feasibly drastic reforms of those with
this highly complexed communication- or network-oriented society based on contemporary information-oriented one. Young student and pupils have today enjoyed practices in the diversified transmission of studying and learning domains about communication, information and computerization using many educational versions of information and network systems throughout various types of schools and even in some ambitious play-schools or kindergartens in many advanced countries.

We can here point out such major keywords of the socio-economic background and changes of business or campus circumstances as a deregulation or liberalization trend, b service- or software-oriented industrialization, c globalization or highly internationalized management, d value of information and intelligence, e aging society, f fewer children or decreasing population ratio of children, g management of environmental protection, h international competitiveness, i disclosure of business and public management information, j managerial responsibility, k preference and behaviour of taxpayers.

Above all these items we may easily put emphasis on one of the ruling keys upon the information to get much more sufficient understandings about news matters. In this article we would therefore consider some useful roles of employing fundamental or applied academic debates as studying materials in the basic to intermediate courses of seminars and classes.

II For Means of Planning and Information Management

As is well known, one of the keen issues in modern business economics and business administration studies could today be stressed on the management of information, covering MIS and other related strategic methods which have continuously renovated and developed amongst most kinds of industries and private or public corporations for better achievement of management planning.

Most students of departments of economics, management and other related social studies will get their future jobs after graduation at companies, banks, governments and others. It can indeed be very helpful and effective for them to learn and study introductory level of MIS at least for managerial planning by the basic knowledge and manipulation of personal computers.

It could then become one of the contributing measures that procedures of debating matches require participants to possess adequate knowledges and techniques as being to large extent introduced and adapted into the real business world.

Since every managerial unit of ordinary business organizations should treat any infor-
information to be collected, analysed and selected for specified objectives, some features of debating could involve the brainstorming collecting statistical data, referring books and media outputs, summarizing news stories, and so on, which would really play important roles towards the successful management.

Also it could additionally be expected that the participants would have to brush up on the sense of constructing and running logical strategy for the debates. As the above stated points should usually follow the main policy of strategy, students would therefore obtain some ability to observe managerial targets with various relevant articles through the birdseye.

As is also known, students could learn a lot of meanings and inferences of practical sense of business by utilizing basic administrative control keywords. Any kind of business information would normally be compiled and managed on its importance both in headquarters and within such lines of divisions and departments as (1) strategic management and planning affairs; finance and accounting; legal and general affairs; human resource (personnel and labour) management; purchases; education and training; (2) R & D; production and technology; (3) sales and marketing; (4) overseas operation and international affairs.

Whilst the trend of the proper improvement of disclosure of managerial information has gradually been accelerated especially in developed countries, the value of information and its management can greatly be recognized much more amongst the rest of the administrative control factors.

II For Decision-making by Debate

There has long prevailed in business operations, particularly at many big business houses, making use of such methods as in some kinds of policy debates and the like for policy-making or decision-making activities whether or not policy planners and makers have finally reached some conclusion with unanimity through the process. It is of course natural for any managerial level of stage in organizational decision-making to set up effective measures bringing some certain appropriate results from the procedure.

Regarding debate communication there are several types of debates and their manners including some functions which could surely be adopted to the decision-making for most kinds of organizations.

We would hereafter like to briefly mention the structure of basic academic debates touched upon a little more in respect of contributions to college education in the next section. In spite of choosing typical two- or four-person competition in classes, the argumenta-
tion shall be performed in the constructive and rebuttal speeches. Some cases shall however contain Q & A or cross examination sessions as well as each summary speech from the negative and then the affirmative side. This kind of flow offered and counter-offered by two teams could precisely lead to establishing some practical instrument for improving skills of policy planning and making.

Every participant should be required to prepare making his or her asserting cases understandable and persuasive to the audience with logically adequate reasoning. One of the typical patterns of ordinary assertions would be illustrated as follows:

```
CLAIM ←
↑
WARRANT
down
↑
EVIDENCE
```

Referring Toulmin Model\(^{10}\), claim or conclusion consisting an argument shall be supported by evidence or data as well as warrant or logical connecting link between the data and the claim, although a few cases could employ direct link of reasoning from the evidence to the claim. In this sense as the data could involve social custom, belief, truth, and so forth.

We might rewrite the above into the following:

```
CLAIM

↑
WARRANT
/
EVIDENCE
```

Any crucial problem not merely in business organizations but in any other sector including governments or households could in general become a debate proposition on campus. Under some interesting and suitable propositions students prepare to make their cases both in the affirmative and negative, with enough brainstorming, library survey for research and collecting data, and evaluating evidence.

Cross-examination or Q & A session can surely give members the opportunity to exchange their opinions and make them understood to each other in order to persuade the third party there and then obtain approval or favourable vote for the better performance.
Even basic academic debates require students to do and check ASQ. They should try to know what are defects or harms, effective plans or ways to remove difficulties, plans’ workability and solvency as well as their advantages and disadvantages. Through main speeches and discussion process students could come to realize some important keypoints for decision-making know-how with mutual understanding, relationship and cooperative behaviour with their colleagues, which would be valuable subproducts.

IV On Some Implications to Educational Standings

As to the applications of policy debate towards the educational fields, some academic debate styles have widely been introduced both into high school and college curriculums of subjects in speech communication and forensic studies.

It would normally be desirable for students to prefer any subject amongst those enabling them to brush up on their proficiency or skill not only to communicate with others by expressing their own opinions but to make cases and reports on speeches by doing research works standing on bipartisan viewpoints of the affirmative and negative. These training activities would surely allow students to grasp by themselves what are substantial problems to be resolved in social or world trends as well as in their daily life around at home or on campus.

Even though so-called Japanese style of business management has been on the way to be drastically changed in various fields including human resource management, effective and adequate cooperation between the individual and group dynamism can highly be expected for the time being. The latter part of team-working has greatly contributed to the high-speed growth of Japanese economy or enterprises since Meiji Restoration.

On the contrary the former counterpart might just have been about to take its own direction toward self-governing business partner and the like as typically observed in U. S. business organizations. It should moreover be required for executives or board members to be responsible to possess at least minimum proficiency in legal affairs with properly appropriate knowledge and information. We could briefly pick up such important points for managers to think about in relation to communication: (1) intraindustry relationship, (2) corporation as citizen, (3) corporate culture, (4) service-oriented manufacturing and economy, (5) public relations for regional communities, (6) customers’ or tax payers’ satisfaction, and so forth.

Students taking debate practices in class will have an opportunity and task to tackle at least one proposition beginning with subjective self-brainstorming and research works by themselves in order to examine what are problems and relevant policies to be solved for bet-
terment, so that they could make substantial cases for the constructive and rebuttal argumentations.

Again, students could normally benefit from improved thinking, listening and writing ability by practicing debates with i) finding problems, ii) research work, iii) policy-making, iv) policy evaluation, v) training speech presentation and performance, vi) learning communication skills and others, with much interests both in the social and public topics and the personal and private ones.

We could finally recognize for students to have mutual understanding with colleagues, opponent team members and people of the audience through preparation and debating process, for stimulating and brushing up their capabilities in educational training of academic debates, as well as utilizing such results as presentation and reporting skills which could surely be applied for their business activities in near future.

Notes

1) Non-Governmental Organizations
2) Electronic Mechanics
3) As for kinds of debates see Klopf and Kawashima (1996) for instance. Regarding academic debate there might be substantive debate in daily social life including legal and business affairs, and academic debate amongst university students, which contains standard debate in high-school classes.
4) Management Information System
5) There are several types of debates and their strategies being taken in debate communication. See Thomas (1979), Goodnight (1987) and others in detail.
6) For new comers training at many of Japanese business organizations in every spring, the following very familiar device circular has often been taught at the beginning:

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PLAN

ACTION

CHECK

(SEE)

DO
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This has long been recognized as one of the most efficient notions to develop TQC (total quality control) activities with almost unanimous participation.

7) Including matters on patents.
8) It can indeed be possible for persons to utilize debates for their current administrative affairs even in a small or family business house.
9) It has gradually become popular for students to have trially experienced somewhat of academic debate communication in previous school days and now in a few university classes such as at Sophia, Kyushu,
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Kanda Gaigo (Foreign Language), and so forth.

10) See Toulmin (1964) for example.

11) Analysis of the status quo

12) Goodnight (1987) picked up investigation and analysis, critical thinking skills, open-mindedness and others as keypoints in educational practices.

13) As for this, Uchida (1992) has touched upon some of the previous features in Japanese banking industry.

14) Regarding the relationship to career development programmes and/or corporate governance we would later treat in another literature.

References


Thomas, D. A. ed. (1979) *Advanced Debate*, National Textbook Company
