

HANDOUT: DELIBERATION VS. DEBATE

Deliberation

Deliberation is collaborative: the sides work together to formally discuss.

Deliberation builds a learning relationship between people.

Deliberation encourages the participants to identify questions and goals they could share.

In a deliberation the goals are sharing ideas and considering new ideas.

In a deliberation all voices are valued and everyone contributes to solving a problem.

In a deliberation you believe that many solutions might exist, and that different people have parts of the best solutions.

In a deliberation you listen to and are sensitive to each other's feelings, hopes, and ideas.

In a deliberation you contribute your best ideas to be improved upon.

In a deliberation you listen to each other to understand and build knowledge for decision-making.

In a deliberation you search for the good parts of other people's ideas.

In a deliberation you may consider new ideas and even change your mind completely i.e. the fifth option

Deliberation encourages you to evaluate yourself and your ideas.

Deliberation is more likely to promote open-mindedness, including an openness to being wrong.

Deliberation encourages you to see all sides of an issue.

Deliberation invites keeping the topic open even after the discussion formally ends.

Debate¹

Debate is a type of fight: two sides oppose each other to prove each other wrong.

Debate builds a competitive relationship between people.

Debate encourages each side to articulate its own questions and goals.

In a debate the goal is winning with your own ideas.

In a debate one person and viewpoint wins, the other is dismissed.

In a debate you believe that there is one solution that you have it, and other solutions are not considered.

In a debate you do not care about the feelings, hopes and ideas of others.

In a debate you contribute your ideas and defend them against challenges.

In a debate you listen to each other to find flaws and disagree with the other participants.

In a debate you search for weaknesses in others people's ideas.

In a debate you do not admit you are considering new ideas and you must not change your mind, or you lose.

Debate encourages you to criticize others and their ideas.

Debate creates a close-minded attitude, a determination to be right.

Debate encourages you to see only two different sides of an issue.

Debate, by creating a winner and a loser, discourages further discussion.

¹ Adapted from Boston Area Educators for Social Responsibility workshop handout, BAESR, Cambridge, MA, 1985.