TTEDSC Virtual Debating - 2016

Eligibility to Program

Any Australian independent school is theoretically eligible as long as they can fulfil the technical requirements needed to run an initiative of this nature. It is an absolute application of Video Conferencing.

Background

The 2015 Virtual Debating trial was restricted to original TtEDSC project schools that had obtained a Polycom 6000 encoder device through the project or had equivalent equipment capable of H.323/SIP protocol communications. These devices in Australia are usually but not exclusively supplied by Polycom, Cisco (Tandberg) or LifeSize.

We used the ZOOM platform to run the debates in 2015 and will continue to use this for 2016. One of the big advantages of this platform is that allows both the full VC encoder devices and desktop computers to join the same sessions.

Equipment Requirements

Given the capability of the ZOOM platform we intend to open up the 2016 debating program to some schools that only have computer desktop access. Priority will be given to schools with H323/SIP protocol encoder devices but we will accommodate schools with desktop access if they can offer an appropriate level of peripherals (microphone, speakers & cameras) that can be used with their desktops. This combination should provide and experience that approaches that provided by the dedicated encoder devices. Expected device characteristics are:

- Microphones - ability to pick up participant input from anywhere in a reasonable sized room. They are also “echo-cancelling” which means output from the speakers is detected and not permitted to loop back through the microphone; very disconcerting for those speaking at the other end and unacceptable in a debate scenario.

- Speakers - sound output sufficient so incoming audio can be heard comfortably anywhere in the room

- Cameras – HD high quality cameras that can ZOOM and PAN to any position in the room. Digital ZOOM acceptable but optical zoom desired. Programmable pre-set positions available on most encoder cameras.
Structure of Debates

The debates will have different structure and rules depending on the age groups of the competitors. Allowance for younger age groups is made in an attempt to make this a more formative experience for students at this level. All teams will have 3 speakers with an optional 4th silent speaker who may help out team mates during preparation and during the debate. See descriptions for each age level below.

- **Year 11 & 12 debates** - Debates have one hour of preparation time. Teams do not know the topic or which side of the debate they are on until 1 hour before the debate starts. The host will reveal the topic and randomly establish the affirmative & negative teams. Schools will then mute the microphones but leave their cameras running. After an hour the adjudicator will join the session and start the debate. This level will allow an “authentic” approach to preparation and teams will be able to access the Internet and other content sources during their hour of preparation. **No teacher input is allowed at this level.**

- **Year 9 & 10 debates** - Debates have one hour of preparation time. Teams do not know the topic or which side of the debate they are on until 1 hour before the debate starts. The host will reveal the topic and randomly establish the affirmative & negative teams. Schools will then mute the microphones but leave their cameras running. After an hour the adjudicator will join the session and start the debate. This level will allow an “authentic” approach to preparation and teams will be able to access the Internet and other content sources during their hour of preparation. **Teacher input is allowed for technique only, not supplying content for arguments.**

- To reflect the age and inexperience of the younger teams an allowance is made to ensure a more formative experience. The “live” one hour preparation period will be not enforced and students will be able develop their cases in the week leading up to the debate.

- **Year 7 & 8 debates** – Teachers in this division will receive their topic and indication of Affirmative or Negative position a week before the debate. All resources can be utilised to build arguments but **teacher input is allowed for technique only, not supplying content for arguments.**

- **Year 5 & 6 debates** – Teachers in this division will receive their topic and indication of Affirmative or Negative position a week before the debate. All resources can be utilised to build arguments and **teacher assistance is allowed for content and technique.**
• **Time allowed** for the whole process will depend on division. We advise the following for your planning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Total Time Allowance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years 5 &amp; 6</td>
<td>1 hour (no preparation hour required)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years 7 &amp; 8</td>
<td>1 hour (no preparation hour required)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years 9 &amp; 10</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years 11 &amp; 12</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**This may include:**

- Preparation – 1 hour
- Speaking times differ in each age division as outlined below.

Debate – 6 speakers – 18 minutes up to 48 minutes depending on division.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Warning Bell</th>
<th>Speaking time (2 bells)</th>
<th>Continuous bell</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years 5 &amp; 6</td>
<td>3 minutes</td>
<td>4 minutes</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years 7 &amp; 8</td>
<td>4 minutes</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
<td>6 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years 9 &amp; 10</td>
<td>6 minutes</td>
<td>7 minutes</td>
<td>8 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years 11&amp;12</td>
<td>7 minutes</td>
<td>8 minutes</td>
<td>9 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Adjudication – 15 minutes

**Scoring**

It will be a three on three school debate. There are no PsOI or Replies in this format. Scoring will be between 70-80 with the average speech receiving a 75.

The scores will further be divided into three sections: Matter (or content: the logical construction of arguments and the level of engagement in refutation), Manner (or style: the use of verbal and non-verbal techniques to engage the audience) and Method (or structure and strategy: the organisation of the speech to maximise clarity and persuasiveness). Matter and Manner will be worth 40 marks each and Method will be worth 20 marks: a speech with average Matter or Manner will receive a 30, and a speech with average Method shall receive a 15, etc.
For further information on scoring or the technical aspects of debating consult the Australasian Debating Guide: http://www.tdu.org.au/objects/guide.pdf

Testing Connections – Very important

Four separate parties are involved in an online debate – host, adjudicator (paid), Team 1 & Team 2. **Don’t be the one to let all these people down!**

It is essential that schools test their connectivity on the conference links before the event. The meetings are set to “Join before host” so you can do this test at any time leading up to the debate. Allow a couple of days so if a problem exists ample time is available for trouble-shooting by your technical staff. Changes in your school network configuration can “break” a previously working encoder configuration.

If you are a Polycom user from the original TtEDSC project, please access Electroboard for assistance vchelpdesk@elb.com.au

Microphone Use during debates

In general, the non-speaking team should have their microphone muted for the greater part of the opposition speakers delivery. It is a nice touch however to applaud the opposition speaker at the beginning and end of their delivery and obviously the microphone needs to be on at this stage.

Camera Use during debates

In a debate at least two camera ZOOM and PAN positions should be utilised:

1. **A close up of the current speaker** – possibly at a lectern. All speakers should assume the same position
2. **A frame including the whole team** – this pre-set could be used when the other team is speaking.

For schools without software adjustable ZOOM and PAN on their web cameras these changes will need to be made manually and as quickly as possible.

All good encoder cameras allow **pre-sets**. These are quickly accessed settings that direct the camera to a predetermined PAN and ZOOM level. This is desirable in a good conference to avoid the time and disruption on manual repositioning and focusing.

**For example - The following instructions work for most Polycom HDX series encoders:**

**SET UP CAMERA PRESETS**

1. Navigate through the MENU and select the CAMERA with the Remote Control.
2. Use the NAVIGATION ARROWS and/or ZOOM options on the Remote Control to position the camera in a desired position.

3. Press and hold (for minimum 3 seconds) any of the NUMBER KEYS on the Remote Control.

4. The Camera Preset is confirmed.

5. This will also be noted on the TV/Projector screen.

ACCESS THE PRESETS

1. Open a VC Call.
2. During the VC, press a specific NUMBER KEY on the Remote Control that has already been preset.

3. The Camera will automatically move to that preset position.