

## Pros and cons debate

In this exercise, short group debates about pros and cons of collaborative planning are organised. The idea is to get students really thinking about the two sides of the issue and to also get them talking and developing their communication skills.

Students should be advised that a successful debate is not a shouting match or opportunity to belittle someone's opinions. Debating is about using argument and persuasion to convince other people that your views are right.

### Requirements

- Approx. 45 minutes.
- Possibility of freely arranging chairs in the course room.

### Schedule

1. Divide students into small groups of 2-4 people.
2. Introduce the topic, i.e. something to argue about. For variety, different groups should discuss different matters, and the topics may be freely chosen. Here are some suggestions related to collaborative planning:

- Collaborative planning gives too much power to the lay person and downgrades the role of the professional.
- Collaborative planning is impossible because it asks too much of those without detailed scientific knowledge.
- There is always a best answer to any planning problem.

3. Assign the groups opposite positions: they must be either for (affirmative team) or against (negative team) the argument.
4. Give the teams some time to discuss their positions and formulate their arguments and speeches.
5. Invite two opposite teams for debating. Lead the debate and allow the students to only speak in turns. Set a time limit for each speech.
6. First there will be a constructive speech from one of the affirmative team members to support their argument; then a member of the negative team will present their opposite view and rebut the arguments presented by the affirmative team.

7. The debate continues and the two sides speak alternately for and against. Those not involved in the current discussion may pose questions.
8. In the end, there will be closing speeches and brief summaries of what has been said from both of the teams.
9. It is possible to let the audience decide on the winner of the debate by voting.

## Panel discussion

Panel discussions are a common form of participation which, on its own, does not constitute collaborative planning but can be part of a collaborative process.

Instead of a debate, this exercise can also be turned into a panel discussion. In this case, a few students will act as panel members, experts on the subject. The others will form the audience, listening and posing questions to the panel.