ESU TEACHING RESOURCE

DEFENDING THE INDEFENSIBLE

OVERVIEW

This game introduces students to Response. Students get used to disagreement as something that is part of the activity, rather than something that has any implications of personal animosity.

This activity also offers the opportunity for students to approach it in a fun, creative way, as well as on a more serious level.

OBJECTIVES

- To relax, and to practice making arguments for a position you may not agree with
- To practice thinking of new ideas quickly

RESOURCES

Some topics, e.g.
The world is flat
We should ban the colour blue
No-one should be allowed to play football
Chocolate is terrible

TASK

Give each student an apparently indefensible statement. You don't need a unique topic for every single student, but it's good to have a variety in the class.
Students now have 5 minutes to think of ways to defend their statement. When the 5 minutes is up, select students or ask for volunteers to 'defend the indefensible' in front of the class.

Tip:
More shy students may be willing to speak in front of small groups, even if they are not yet ready to try making a speech in front of the class. To facilitate this, split the class into groups of four or five. Prepare in advance five "indefensible" statements so that each member of the group can have a different prompt. After students have had 5 minutes to think of ways to defend their statements, ask them to give these defences in their small groups. After all students have presented, ask each group to nominate one person to speak in front of the class. You can also introduce a feedback element here, by asking the group to prepare their nominated speaker with constructive comments.