

Formal Debates

One of the original goals of MSLBD was to make use of innovative formats, particularly those which stimulate thinking, or lead to greater potential engagement than traditional formats. From 1983 to 1991 a formal Oxford style debate occurred each Thursday evening. This consisted of two teams with two debaters on each team. The topics and debaters had been identified months before. The affirmative team supported the proposition with the negative team opposing it. The teams were to construct the best arguments for or against the proposition they could with evidence from research or literature. The individual debaters advocated for or against the proposition, regardless of their personal position on the topic.



Each debate began with four 10-minute speeches – first from an affirmative debater, followed by a negative debater, then a second affirmative and the second negative. Each team member was then allowed a 5-minute rebuttal speech to contest the arguments presented by the other team.



In the first few debates, debaters wore formal academic caps, gowns, and sashes. Debate speeches were timed and judged. After the rebuttal speeches, the three judges deliberated, announced the debate winning team, and presented the trophies to the winning team. All participants received souvenir patches.



In 1992, after eight Oxford debates were held, a less formal, non-Oxford format was implemented. The last debate was presented in 1996. Since then, a variety of other session formats have been employed.

Video recordings are available of all the debates at: <https://mslbd.org/what-we-do/video-recordings/>. The 1984 debate was edited and published:

Peterson, R. L., & Zabel, R. H. (Eds.). (1985). Aversives in special programs for behaviorally disordered: A debate. *Behavioral Disorders, 10*(4), 295-304.

Debate Topics and Debaters

- 1983 Resolved that educational programming for behavior disordered youth should be provided in a non-categorical framework. Sharon Huntze, Karen Janssen, Mike Nelson & Rich Simpson
- 1984 Resolved that all aversive procedures, not commonly used in regular education, should be prohibited in behavior disorders programs. Ellen McGinnis, Debra Scott-Miller, Rick Neel & Carl Smith

1985 Resolved that socially maladjusted children and youth should be included with the behavior disordered. Linda Edwards, Maureen White, Dave Benson & Jon Rosell

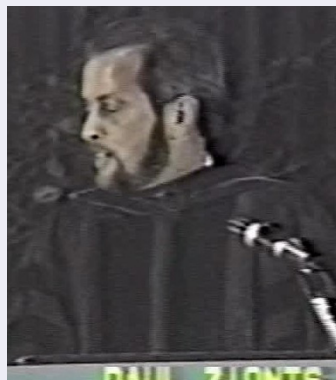
1986 Resolved that behaviorally disordered students are handicapped by their behavioral and emotional



disorders- therefore special education programs for these students should primarily emphasize remediation of these disorders and should view academic progress as a secondary consideration. Nancy George, Pnina Goldfarb, Rick Lindskog & George Sugai

1987 Resolved that schools should engage in interventions designed to affect the behavior of parents in order for significant lasting academic and behavioral improvement in behavior disordered students to occur. Sue Ellen McCalley, Margaret Walker, Gary Sasso & Jack Schroeder

1988 Resolved that behaviorally disordered students exhibiting violent behaviors should not be served in the regular public-school setting. Barbara Braaten, Mary Ann Steele, Bill Boomer & Lonny Morrow



1989 Resolved that behavior disorders are a life-long condition, and the goal must be accommodation, not remediation. Kay Cessna, Judith Grosenick, James Kauffman & Paul Zionts

1990 Resolved that special education for behaviorally disordered students cannot free itself of cultural biases. Identification and treatment of behavior disorders should only be for those students who manifest behaviors viewed as deviant by most cultures. Eun-Ja Kim Park, Brenda Walker, Mike Pullis & Tom Reilley

1991 Resolved that the quality and quantity of university training of teachers of students with behavior disorders have less impact on the development of a master teacher than the person's basic personality traits.

Rosemary Graves, Tanice Knopp, Tom Turnage & Larry Wheeler



Non-Oxford Debates

1992 REI – Promises or Progress? Pat All, Betty Epanchin, Sheldon Braaten & Jim Caccomo

1993 Full inclusion for students with behavior disorders? James Kauffman, Richard Villa & a panel of respondents.

1994 Education reform: What will it really mean for students with BD? Jim Shriner, Diane Sydorik & a panel of respondents.

1995 Children and Youth with Aggressive and Violent Tendencies Richard Van Acker & a panel of respondents

1996 Building Positive School Discipline: Zero Tolerance for Conditions that Result in Expulsion. Reece Peterson, Mitch Yell, Russ Skiba, Tara Williams & a panel of others.