CASE Debates Mentorship Project

CASE Debates is excited to announce a new program that it’s heading: its mentorship project. Alumni that were once high school debaters return to classrooms to mentor other students that participate in CASE Debates. As one of the first mentors to volunteer their time and as a former CASE Debates student, Riley Hardwick is enjoying mentoring debate students at Harmony High School.

She started debating in eighth grade and continued throughout high school. She notes that once you join debate, you become a part of a network of young intellectuals who become your friends through teamwork and competitive spirit. According to Riley, being a mentor comes with challenges as well as successes. The biggest challenge has been the transition from student all her life to now, an educator. She’s learned that a mentor must accommodate a fostering environment for different opinions and viewpoints. She also recognizes that each debater has their own unique style, but she can help them further develop the technical aspects of their delivery such as the research component.

Mentorship is an integral component within the growing CASE Debates program. “Dappen and Iserhagen (2005) and Ahrens et al. (2010) all agreed that improved grades, better attendance, and a reduction in dropout rates result from effective mentoring.” This is because students have one-on-one coaching with a mentor that knows how it feels to be in their place as a high school debater. The mentor can offer personalized advice based on their experiences. We are thankful for CASE Debates mentors that are willing to help a new generation of developing debaters find their voice within the classroom and the world at large.

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