

Midwest SoTL 16th Annual Conference, Indiana University South Bend



A Dynamic Teaching Strategy for Motivating Students and Teachers

By

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Motivating Moot

Moot: Distance education (DE) allows for *human and social development* to a **greater extent** in the **21st Century** than in previous centuries. Distance Education learners thrive in the 21st Century because the DE environment fosters **equitable access** to higher education at affordable costs to students in a highly **collaborative** and technological environment for developing their human and social capital.








Motivating Format

The debate will have three (3) rounds and each group member should do the following:

- o **Round 1:** make a post *for* or *against* the moot (debate topic) in your home forum by **Wednesday 23rd October by 9:55 p.m.** your local time.
- o **Round 2:** cross over and rebut at least one of your opponents' arguments by **Friday 25th October by 9:55 p.m.** your local time.
- o **Round 3:** return to your home forum and rebut any arguments that were pointed towards your original arguments by **Monday 28th October by 9:55 p.m.** your local time.

If no one rebutted your original arguments, then help your group members defend those arguments pointed towards their original posts.

Debating Forums

Discussion	Started by	
Group 3 – Positive Position		Firm Nelson
What a Great Debate!		Firm Nelson
Group 2 - Negative Position		Firm Nelson
Group 1- Positive Position		Firm Nelson
Group 4 - Negative Position		Firm Nelson
Word limit for debate postings		Madeline Trotman
The Great Debate!		Firm Nelson

Specific Instructions



The Great Debate!

by Firm Nelson - Sunday, 20 October 2013, 6:53 PM

Hello students

I eagerly anticipate your thoughtful arguments *for* and *against* the moot of this great debate!

To participate in the debate, please remain in your existing groups (i.e. groups 1– 4 from the Module 1 Unit 3 discussion). Groups 1 and 3 will argue the positive position and Groups 2 and 4 will argue the negative position. Each group should remain in their debating room (A or B) to argue for or against the moot (see debating rooms below).

DEBATING ROOM A

Group 1 – Positive Position

Group 2 – Negative Position

DEBATING ROOM B

Group 3 – Positive Position

Group 4 – Negative Position

Clear Guidance



The Great Debate!

by Firm Nelson - Sunday, 20 October 2013, 6:53 PM

Tips to consider:

- Design a group strategy for each round. Below are a few options.
 - **Round 1** - Consider assigning roles for each group member. For example, the first 'speaker' may introduce and clarify the key concepts of the moot and include sound arguments to set a firm foundation for the remaining speakers to build on.
 - **Round 2** – Agree on the name(s) of the opponent(s) that each group member will rebut.
 - **Round 3** - Help your group members defend arguments that were rebutted (especially if your arguments were not rebutted in round 2).
- Examine the assumptions on which your opponents based their arguments or premise.
- Post arguments in your group's home forum for rounds 1 and 3.
- Cross over to rebut your opponents' arguments in round 2 only.
 - **Room A:** Group 1 should cross over to the Group 2 forum only (and vice versa).
 - **Room B:** Group 3 should cross over to the group 4 forum only (and vice versa).
 - Do not rebut arguments in room 'A' if your group has been assigned to debate in room 'B' (and vice versa).

Feel free to:

- make additional arguments in any round of the debate if time permits.
- use real debating terms (e.g. *my worthy opponent*, *honorable colleagues* etc).

Remember to provide references and examples to support the premise on which you base your arguments.

I will be in the audience watching. All the best!

Round 1 - Positive Position

Madam Chairperson, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I would begin with a quote by Henry Jenkins:

"In a world in which knowledge production is collective and communication occurs across an array of different media, the capacity to network emerges as a core social skill. A resourceful student is no longer one who personally possesses a wide palette of resources and information, but rather, one who is able to successfully navigate an already abundant and continually changing world of information." Henry Jenkins

Colleagues, I am sure you will agree that distance education of the 21st century is quite different from that of the industrial era. Distance education of today is not just the digital technologies, but more importantly the pedagogical approaches they enable. No longer is it teacher-centered but learner-centered. Distance education focuses on collaboration grounded in the social constructivist learning theory. It is interactive, generative and uniquely participatory (Jenkins, 2006; Tapscott & Williams, 2006). Distance education fosters learners' human and social development in the 21st century than in previous centuries.

In this century more than ever technology serves as a facilitator of learning. The technologies used to deliver distance education help to mediate communication between students and facilitators (Garrison, 1990). As technology has evolved, improvements have been made in student interactions with content and instruction, as I am sure my esteemed opponents can attest to being a part of this UWI Open Campus experience. The improvements in the level and types of interactions provide students with access to information that might not have otherwise been available (Taylor, 1995).

Major steps in technology over the last two centuries have increased learner choices. These rapid changes have been influenced by learners' needs. Antiquated methods of correspondence courses and radio programmes are unable to meet the demand of a sophisticated learner. A number of options exist today for the delivery of distance education.

Today the rapid pace of technology utilizes development in electronic networks, computers and internet technology. The internet facilitates education as a resource for personal study and as a platform for distance education. The ability to integrate multimedia in course design improves delivery and is beneficial for learners and tutors. Both audio and video are now common components of web-based delivery. Differentiated instruction is afforded by the internet preventing the isolation of distance learners through active interaction and exploration.

Distance education today allows for effective time management. Online education makes resources available 24/7 making it convenient for working adults in particular. Learners and tutors can effectively manage their own time for any synchronous interaction.

The 21st century learner requires educational opportunities not constrained by time or place, yet allow interaction with peers and instructors. According to Snelbecker (1999), technology maintains a symbiotic relationship with instructional theories. Online distance education integrates emerging technologies such as blogs, wikis, mobile technologies and podcasts to achieve communication and interaction which support learning.

Technology-based learning in the 21st century has facilitated a shift from standardization to customization. Cultural diversity, learning preference and ability level are issues that validate the need for a learner-focused system (Reigeluth, 1999). Learners work at his/her own pace on authentic, real world tasks. Learners can customize their level of interaction by choosing when and how to interact.

Distance education continues to foster human and social development as learners' demand continues to grow. The evolving technology will continue to propel online learning with innovations, creating learning environments thus preparing adults to be lifelong learners nationally and globally.

Round 2 - Negative Position

Group 3, I will like to commend you on your debate, you were informative as it speaks to the benefits that learners can derive from 21st century distance education environment. Those that Nzinga indicated include; major steps in technology over the last two centuries have increased learner choices, online education makes resources available 24/7, the internet facilitates education as a resource for personal study and technology-based learning in the 21st century has facilitated a shift from standardization to customization.

However, the question wanted you to highlight that distance education learners thrive in a distance education environment that fosters equitable access to higher education at affordable costs to students in a highly collaborative and technological environment for developing their human and social capital, not the benefits of distance education. But I am cognisant that it was very difficult for you to defend this position, since the literature clearly alludes to the fact that distance education environment does not foster the abovementioned.

This is clearly exemplified firstly by (Berge, 1997), who pointed out several limitations of 21st century distance education environment, which make equitable, affordable access impossible. These limitations include the fact that there is a lack of reliable access to local area networks(LANs), wide area networks(WANs), or Internet-connected hardware (Hiltz, 1978; Johansen et al., 1977) cited in(Berge, 1997) . Other important obstacles include technically unreliable systems, poorly designed user-unfriendly interfaces, and a lack of user training regarding the hardware, software, and network on which teaching and learning takes place (Kaye, 1989) cited in(Berge, 1997). Users must practice and become familiar with their system's hardware, software, and network capabilities, to the point where the technology becomes relatively transparent, before they can focus on course content rather than use of the delivery system (Berge, 1997). This conflicts with your position that as technology has evolved; improvements have been made in student interactions with content and instruction. (Anderson, 2008), drew attention to access issues, when he acknowledged that all the new technologies required higher speed connections than what dial-up connectivity systems could support, and that they were designed for a 'network-infused society'.

Evidently, some learners may not be able to afford these new 21st century technologies. Those learners, who lack the technologies, do not have telecommunication capabilities to use a common computer and are not familiar with the hardware, software, and network on which distance education teaching and learning take place will not be able to thrive, nor have equitable access. This makes it difficult for them to interact with the content, and develop their human and social capital.

Secondly, (Goel, 2002) postulates that research studies have indicated that student support sustains motivation of students to learn and continue the course and not drop out. In reviewing technologies that are available for student support in distance education, it is tempting to focus on the new and latest developments in information and communications technology (ICT). However, the experiences of open universities in both the developing and developed world suggest that students are best served when a combination of old and new technologies are employed. This is a clear indictment against your argument that distance education fosters learners' human and social development in the 21st century than in previous centuries. It is critical however, to recognise, that in discussing the role of technology in student support, that the choices are made in part by what is readily available, what is best for the task at hand, what students can easily use and what is affordable by both the institution and the students (Goel, 2002).

Finally, according to experts in distance education who did studies in Hubei Province in China, when distance learning methods are applied to basic primary and secondary education "where educational technology has been used to enhance education rather than to provide an alternative, its costs are additional to those of regular schools. If these technologies are to be used, they need to demonstrate an educational value that justifies the extra cost." (Perraton, 2000, pp.127-8) cited in (McQuaide, 2009). This example clearly indicates that distance education is not always affordable for learners. Hence to ensure viability distance learning programs must speak to the India's National Open School, distance learning program, which offers secondary education to learners from low income and disadvantaged social groups. K. Sujatha describes the school's delivery model as "combining self-study and Study Center support, complementing these with electronic media in a very limited way." (Sujatha, 2002, pp. 95-96) cited in (McQuaide, 2009). In an environment that is patterned after the abovementioned I am sure that learners will thrive and that there will be more equitable access at affordable prices.

Round 3 - Positive Position

Our worthy opponent has tried to separate advancement in technology from strides made in distance education(DE); it's like trying to drive a car without an engine. Major steps in DE through the use of technology have facilitated learner development through fostering equitable access to higher education at affordable costs in a highly collaborative environment. We are cognisant that our opponent may be unaware of the literature on the symbiotic relation between technology and education over the centuries.

Our knowledgeable opponent has clearly pointed out the scholarly challenges that are faced worldwide due to changes in technology. If advancement in technology would have ceased because of the high prices of computers our worthy opponent would not be able to afford to engage in an online education programme today. Computers did not remain desktops and high priced. The challenges of accessibility and hence equity would always be a part of education and development. The scholarly have pointed out the challenges, the role of education and technology is to find solution and not to stop at hurdles. Technology is evolving and become more accessible and affordable any well-read student will be aware of this simple fact.

Our worthy opponent is indeed agreeing with us in the use of technology to facilitate learning more in 21st century than ever. The combination of foundational technology with latest is advancement and education is primarily about what is best for the student, hence human development occurs. Distance Education attempts to harness the most appropriate medium for student learning. For learners to be connected to the global village education and technology must continue to collaborate.

Our worthy opponent seems to have discovered blended learning which a form of DE. This is an excellent point to support our argument that technology working together with education can create solutions to the challenges of accessibility and equity. We thank our opponent for this discovery which was made in our favour.

In today's society workers are encouraged to build learning communities to pursue knowledge in areas of common interest, to teach each other and share what they have found. Web 2.0 has enabled ordinary people, exploring matters that are very close to them, to become a primary dynamic of the Internet (Coté and Pybus, 2007). For example, workers who share a common employer, occupation, union or issues like health and safety concerns, are interacting on Facebook, creating networks, sharing insights and technical tips, venting, co-ordinating actions, and just generally doing good and useful things (Blackadder, 2007). Matzat's (2004) states that the role of Internet discussion groups in informal communication between academics can fulfil some communication needs and allows colleagues to be more aware of each others output, as we are experiencing in this debate. Additionally, Fountain (2005) posits that there are strong indications that the WWW is a new space through which job information can flow. So colleagues how can we not stand firm in our position that distance education fosters learners' human and social development in the 21st century more than in previous centuries.

References

Blackadder, D. (2007) Not just another pretty Face(book): Organizing through social networking sites has its advantages, Straight Goods, <http://www.straightgoods.ca/ViewFeature7.cfm?REF=382>

Students' Reactions

Hi Ladies!

As usual, I have thoroughly enjoyed working with this group! Our cohesiveness has, once again, paid off!!! Hat's off to you on a wonderful and unforgettable experience!!

May we all continue to enjoy rewarding success both as a group and in our individual pursuits! 😊😊

Kesha

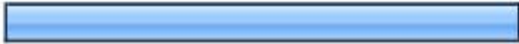
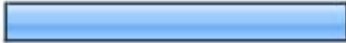
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The course was very useful and practical, and should serve as a solid base for those of us who will be working in online/ blended learning scenarios

Their approach to the course made it very interesting. The debates, collaborative activity and word limits on the postings made the discussion forum much easier to manage, relieved much of the monotony and made it much more enjoyable.

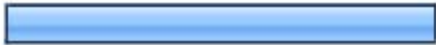
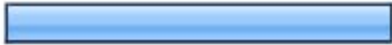

Students' Reactions

The course helped to develop my ability to think critically

		Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly agree		60.0%	12
Agree		40.0%	8
Disagree		0.0%	0
Strongly disagree		0.0%	0
		answered question	20
		skipped question	0



Students' Reactions

This course helped to develop my communication skills

		Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly agree		50.0%	10
Agree		45.0%	9
Disagree		5.0%	1
Strongly disagree		0.0%	0
		answered question	20
		skipped question	0

Students' Reactions

This course helped to develop my problem solving abilities

		Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly agree		45.0%	9
Agree		55.0%	11
Disagree		0.0%	0
Strongly disagree		0.0%	0
		answered question	20
		skipped question	0

Title

Debating: A Dynamic Teaching Strategy for Motivating Students and Teachers

Meaning

Debate: Arguing for or against a moot and giving reasons for one's stance

Tips

1. Motivating Moot

- ✓ Attract arguments from both sides
- ✓ Relate to students' prior reading, experiences, societal issues etc.
- ✓ Challenge teachers to incorporate new and relevant content

2. Motivating Format

- ✓ Provide clear instructions about what's expected
 - *Round 1:* Post initial arguments for or against the moot, clarify key concepts etc.
 - *Round 2:* Rebut opponents' arguments
 - *Round 3:* Summarize arguments, rebut or defend key points
- ✓ Provide debating tips/guidance
- ✓ Divide class in teams
- ✓ Construct forums (with clear headings and supplementary instructions)

3. Motivating Timeframe

- ✓ Provide enough time for students to present arguments
- ✓ Include encouraging prompts to help students meet deadlines

4. Motivating Interaction

- ✓ Encourage use of debating terminologies
- ✓ Promote collegiality and competition through appropriate language

5. Motivational Assessment and Feedback

- ✓ Provide clear rubric/expectations
- ✓ Communicate timely and encouraging feedback

Students' Reactions

Positive

- ✓ "Unforgettable experience!!"
- ✓ "...made the discussion forum much easier to manage, relieved much of the monotony, and made it much more enjoyable."
- ✓ "The course was very useful and practical, and should serve as base for those who will be working online/blended learning scenarios."

Challenges

- ✓ Grading time
- ✓ Group dynamics
- ✓ Tardy participants

FYfYbWg

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 O'Mahoney, A. (2015). The ancient art of "debating" and it's usefulness



Thank You!