Part Deux: Discussion on the Rocks? Add a Fresh Twist of Alternatives!

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Audience Poll

- Faculty
- Instructional Designer
- Librarian
- Administrator/Executive
- Student
- Other
Overview

- Pain points in online discussions
- “Twist” examples
- Self-Reflection and Group Discussion
ONLINE DISCUSSIONS
Café Online
Discussion on the rocks?

Let’s add a twist of fresh alternatives!
Previously on “DISCUSSION ON THE ROCKS?”...
Twist: External Discussion and Reflection

Students discuss with a friend or colleague a particular viewpoint. Then, after their discussion, they write a reflection about their discussion and learned information.
Twist: Debate

Students would research a particular side or viewpoint of a topic. Then, they would review the other side and write a reflection whether they agree or disagree or what other information might be necessary before they can decide.
Twist: Fishbowl

Similar to a traditional discussion, but only half of class or large group participates in discussion at once (Inside Fishbowl). The other half observes the ongoing discussion while pausing to reflect on given questions (outside fishbowl).
Part Deux: Discussion on the rocks?

Let’s add a fresh twist of alternatives!
Traditional Question

Think about a retail environment you visit often. What are 10 ways consumer marketers try to influence your purchasing decisions leveraging context and the environment?
Twist: Post Images of Examples

Ask students to go to the location and encourage them to post images of their examples.
Let’s add the twist.
Go to a retail environment (e.g., Target, Walmart, local grocery store) and make note of 10 ways consumer marketers try to influence your purchasing decisions leveraging context and the environment. Enter your 10 ways here. You can include pictures (optional).
7. One clever way Target marketed their DVD’s was to sell them as a movie night experience. On the end stand where they placed a variety of movies for adults and kids, they also displayed microwave popcorn, candy and various treats that you would enjoy at the movies. They also made sure all the items had sale stickers on them so you knew you were receiving a discount if you purchased them together.
Poll: Who has used the “Post Images” twist?
It not only feels different for the students, but it is also a different type of activity which will stand out for them. It leverages a different technology, and photos are a great visual tool to solidify class insights. It requires students to explore class topics through a very personal lens (no pun intended).
Post Images of Examples: Tips

- Some students may have trouble uploading images
- Be prepared to provide workarounds
- Remind students about privacy/permission
Traditional Question

Find and read four resources about vaccinations. Post the title, author, and link to each resource, note whether it is pro or anti vaccine (or neutral), and note any other biases.

Next, consider situations where vaccinations are required by state law and respond to the following: Do you find yourself coming down on a “side” of whether vaccines should be required?
Twist: Role Play

The student could be assigned a particular side of a topic and then do some research based upon that role. Then, after posting to the discussion board, they could review the other perspectives and write a reflection based upon the other viewpoints.
Let’s add the twist...
Consider vaccinations from the role assigned to you by the first letter of your last name.

[Roles: Parent of a child with a healthy immune system; college student living on campus; doctor; community member; parent of an immunodeficient child]

Conduct research based upon your assigned role, and summarize what you learn. Be sure to include your view of vaccines in your role.
As a doctor, the entire vaccination debate and “anti-vaccination” movement is not only distressing but also offensive to me. It is distressing to see children suffer, experience irreversible harm or even die from illnesses that are preventable, many that were once completely eradicated. Vaccinations are available for more than 15 serious and deadly diseases including smallpox, mumps, cholera, yellow fever, malaria and tetanus\(^1\). Because of vaccines, many diseases that plagued children for centuries have all but been eliminated. According to many scientists, “vaccines may be the greatest public health achievement of the 20th century”\(^2\). Despite this, in the last decade there has been a resurgence of diseases such as measles and whooping cough\(^3\). How is this possible and how can the topic of vaccinations even be debatable? This debate was fueled by a 1998 study published in a medical journal that falsely asserted a connection between autism and the combined measles-mumps-rubella. In 2010, the author of this article was discredited and the article fully retracted but unfortunately the damage was done\(^4\).

Are vaccinations completely safe? The simple answer is no. No educated and honest doctor will claim that vaccinations are 100% safe. There are risks including

Why am I offended? As a doctor my job is to provide parents and the public in general with my educated advice related to current and science based facts. The suggestion that I would make a recommendation that was unsafe or did not have the best interest of a patient at heart is a personal affront to my professionalism. Additionally, the fact that some people feel that the Internet, their friends or their neighbors, those with no medical degree can provide them with more sound medical advice is truly incredulous to me. For the sake of your child’s health and the health of others, please immunize.

2. Achievements in Public Health, 1900-1999: Control of Infectious Diseases https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm4829a1.htm
Poll: Who has tried the “Role Play” twist?
In general, students appear to be more engaged when you ask them to change their format (and to see an issue from someone else’s perspective).
Role Play: Tips

- Instructors need to remind themselves that it is a role-play when they go to grade it.
- Directions should include “At the top of your post, list the role you are representing.”
- Consider splitting the activity into two parts, students change role in Part 2.
Traditional Question

Write a static method to return to the name of the student in an array who has the highest score.
Twist: Group Problem-Solving

Students engage in a sequential group problem-solving exercise on the discussion board.

The instructor begins the thread and students build toward a solution by making improvements on previous posts.
Let’s add the twist...
We are writing a static method **together** to return to the name of the student in an array who has the highest score.

Your task is to add two posts that **build on the latest posts** or prompts that have not yet been built-on.
We are writing a static method together to return the name of the student in an array who has the highest score.

Question A: What should the parameters of the method be?

Question B: What should the return type be?

Question C: What sort of loop should we use?

Question D: How should we keep track of the highest-scoring student so far?

The instructions for this session say that we start with an array of Student objects, so we are only going to use an array and not lists (which it sounds like we are going to review a bit later in the course). It also says that the Student class already has two public getter methods for getting the name and the score. The static method that we are creating also has to return the name of the student in the Student array who has the highest score. So, to answer question B, the return type should be a String for the name of that student. I imagine that the parameter of the static method should be the Student array that we will be searching through.

I'm assuming that I should only be answering a portion of these questions so that other people will have a chance to give their input, so I'll stop there.
In regards to keeping track of the highest scoring student (Question D), we could do this by declaring a "highest_score" variable of type double inside the method, this can be initialized at zero to begin with. A String variable "highest_scoring_student" should also be declared but not initialized at this point. The method can then include a for loop which would iterate through the array of student objects. Inside the for loop would be an if statement. The if statement may make a comparison as such:

```java
if (students[i].getScore > highest_score) {
    highest_scoring_student = students[i].getName();
    highest_score = students[i].getScore();
}
```

Expanding upon your IF statement I've used a FOR EACH loop. We now need to think about two students having the same score. Currently the last student with the highest score would be returned.

Should we change our return variable to be an Array or should we modify the String to include two or more names?

```java
public static String getHighest(String[] students) {
    double highest_score = 0;
    String highest_scoring_student = "";
    for(String s : students){
        if (s.getScore() > highest_score) {
            highest_scoring_student = s.getName();
            highest_score = s.getScore();
        }
    }
    return highest_scoring_student;
```
Poll: Who has tried the “Group Problem-Solving” twist?
The advantage is that it engages students in the task at hand. Since my course is focused on skill-building. The idea is to give students the feeling of working with the material while others are watching, and they can watch others. We learn from both.
Group Problem-Solving: Tips

- Think about how you will handle students’ mistakes.
- You may need to reorganize or re-start the thread if it becomes disorganized.
- Keep discussion forums visible after the due date so students can refer back to the problem.
Traditional Question

Read the article, *How stores know what you want when you shop*. Post your thoughts on the following:

- Let’s say a software company is selling a product that collects data on specific metrics from your customers. This company sells this data to multiple clients. What would you expect about the degree of differentiation of product offerings in a few years?

- Imagine a fitness center that collected data on their patrons as they spent time in the gym. How could this play out over time? How will it affect traffic to the gym?
Twist: Hypothetical Situation

Students are given a hypothetical situation to analyze and/or evaluate. Then, students respond based upon the information.
Let’s add the twist.
Read the article, *How stores know what you want when you shop* and respond to the following prompts:

- **Hypothetical Situation 1:** You work for a software company that develops fitness trackers. Your competitor, Acme Software Company, is selling a similar product. This company is collecting specific metrics data from your customers and selling the data to multiple clients, including your competitors. **Given this situation, propose and discuss** what you would expect to be the outcome in the domain of “degree of differentiation” of product offerings in 3 to 5 years.

- **Hypothetical Situation 2:** The fitness center you belong to is collecting data on its patrons. This data includes: time of visit, duration of visit, frequency of visits, classes taken, and type of equipment used. **Predict how** this data will affect:
  - The member population and patrons it attracts.
  - The kind of competencies and resources the fitness center may need to build.
  - The kind of new products or services it could roll out.
1. Hypothetical Situation 1: You work for a software company that develops fitness trackers. Your competitor, Acme Software Company, is selling a similar product. This company is collecting specific metrics data from your customers. Acme Software Company then sells the collected data to multiple clients, including your competitors. Given this situation, propose and discuss what you would expect to be the outcome in the domain of “degree of differentiation” of product offerings in 3-to-5 years after using the collected data.

If everyone is working with the same sets of data produced by Acme Software Company, I suspect that it becomes less about the actual data and more about predicting how your competitors are going to respond to that data. If it is discovered that customers prefer the color green, everyone and their best friend is going to make sure that their fitness trackers are designed to be green. It makes sense to start designing your fitness trackers to be green, but everyone else will be too. Having green fitness trackers will not encourage customers to choose your product over the product of competitors.

Initially I think there would be a boom in fitness tracker companies trying to “keep up with Jones”. If green is in, they better have green. In hast to keep up with the market they may not even do it very well. As time goes on companies will need to recover from backslide as a result of not executing a new strategy well (device dyes skin green) and/or finding a way to differentiate themselves away from competitors.

Certain sets of data will have more value to some companies or others. If 3M made fitness trackers it would make perfect sense for them to go after entire healthcare institutions versus a specific population, such as white females ages 32-46. Hospitals buy copious amounts of products all the time from 3M. When I hear 3M I do not think of office supplies, I think of medical supplies. 3M could sell fitness trackers specifically designed to help care professionals monitor and manage patient care.

You may even have a few companies that do not make green fitness trackers. It is possible that their target population is comprised of the small percentage that does not like green.

If companies start to discover that the data provided by Acme Software Company was monumental in the success of strategy they begin to plan longer-term investment in data collection. Applied Predictive Technologies was such a large help to Chico’s that it became part of Chico’s vocabulary (Binkley, 2015). “Did you run that through APT?”

Poll: Who has tried the “Hypothetical Situation” twist?
There is a clear advantage to [using] this format. This exercise provoked robust discussion around these scenarios.
Hypothetical Situation: Tips

- Be more directive and provide additional guidance on expected responses.
- This activity is best performed after completing readings on a topic.
- Have three or four situations. Then, split students into groups to discuss one hypothetical situation. Afterwards, regroup and share information with the entire class.
Traditional Question

Find one user interface and describe 2 “good” design features from that design.

Find another user interface and describe 2 “bad” design features from that design.

Post screenshots showing the designs you are critiquing.
Twist: “Bad”
Design Critique

Ask students to create something that is intentionally “bad” so other students can find the problems and identify the reason(s) the posted design is incorrect.
Let’s add the twist...
• **Design** the *worst* interface you can think of. It should have 5 **bad design features**.
• Describe the 5 bad design features in a document separate from your user interface.
• Review the design assigned to you and post what you think are the five bad design features.
The most obvious fault in design to me would be the color scheme, makes it almost unreadable in certain parts.

- The purple seems okay, as everything seems to be highlighted within those boxes. The neon green is where it is hard to tell what is going on.

Font, the font does not seem to be professional normal standard text would help the viewer understand the tabs better.

- Also with the font and size of the text in certain parts of the green it is hard to understand/see.

Icons, to me it is obvious that the green is start and the red is stop (I would assume), but some are colorblind and may not know this.

- Use of text next to them would help out with that part.

The third purple square is a little confusing I am not sure what that would be for.

- Maybe final time, but that is at the top, or possibly time that a break was taken?

Another point that could be made would be the icons again on the right side, not each tab has one which makes it uneven in the way the design looks.

Also maybe this is just me but the emptiness at the bottom sort of looks off.

Reply
“For this assignment, I actually made a decent interface that might work fairly well. It followed many of the design procedures for making a successful user interface. I then wrecked it to make this monstrosity. There are actually seven bad design features, but you could be thorough and find more.”

-- Student
Poll: Who has tried the “Bad Design” twist?
The assignment was more visual and it had a “reverse” twist to it. That is - I wanted them to create something that was bad. The critique required them to find the problems and identify the reason it was incorrect. Thus they have to learn the “right” way of doing it.
“Bad” Design
Critique: Tips

- Too much of one style of discussion can end up with non-participation. Think carefully about how you are using this type of discussion.
- The same assignment could be used for a “good” design.
- The back and forth nature of the discussion tool works well for this.
Summary of Twists

1. Post images of examples
2. Role play
3. Group problem-solving
4. Hypothetical situation
5. “Bad” design critique
Self-Reflection Questions

- Why do you use discussions in your course(s)?
- Are you achieving what you want? Why or why not?
- Reflect on what you learned today and how you might apply it.
Thank You!

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