



McGill



Le génie pour l'industrie

How to get “Psyched” over ‘Would you publish it?’ – Using debates to develop critical thinking

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- Who we are – how we got together (importance of Faculty Communities of Learning)
- Why Debates

Context

	Junko	Chris
Discipline	Linguistics	Software Engineering
Course level	Undergraduate (upper-level)	Graduate (10% research, 90% professional masters)
Number of students	12 (Fall 2015)	12 (Winter 2016)
Number of debates (articles)	1	2

Learning Outcomes of the activity/assignments

Junko	Chris
To be able to read and evaluate academic papers critically	To be able to read and evaluate academic papers critically
To be able to provide constructive feedback to others	To be able to understand certain software engineering principles
To get a peek into a peer review process for journal publication	To get a peek into a peer review process for journal publication

Process/Implementation

JS:

- In class: Background prep for content
- Outside of class: Read paper w/ criteria; 2 days before debate, students learn which team is taking which position (aff/neg) for which criterion.
- Day of debate: Team discussion (20min.); Debate (35 min.); Voting&decision

CF:

- Énoncé (https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ejnSHTGcY0gPWtBYZe4fXSF2buqVtYad_qEmVFd60ms/view)
- Outside of class: teams assigned, read paper w/ criteria, write report (with constructive feedback).
- Day of debate: Two debates (30 min. each); Voting & decision

Assessment process

	Junko S.	Chris F.
Used Rubrics?	no	Yes (Moodle “marking guide”)
Percentage final grade	2%	10% (60% report, 40% debate)

Student's feedback

Junko S.	Chris F.
'Never read a paper this carefully. Always accepted everything in a published paper.'	[still waiting for the written feedback from students]
'The imposed structure (aff vs. neg) really forced me to look for justifications.'	Reports expressed lots of constructive feedback on articles, especially about clarity.
'Was a great exercise to get prepared for the term-end critical review project.'	The second article was in a review that was more trade-oriented (less scientific rigor) and the students were very aware (and frankly surprised).
'Very curious about what reviews we would actually receive once a revised version is submitted to a journal.'	Students were somewhat disappointed I didn't allow counter-arguments after one round of debating a criterion.

Panel questions

- Was this an engaging activity for your students?
- Was this an engaging activity for you?
- What were the main difficulties encountered?
- Would you do this activity again? What would you change? What would remain the same?

Q&A

Thank you!