

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

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



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# 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).**

1. 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 the same pricing on them so you knew you were receiving a discount if you purchased them together.



Poll: Who has used  
the “Post Images”  
twist?





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## Instructor: Erin Balliet Ratelis



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 work-arounds
- 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.



## Vaccinations - A Doctor's Perspective

By: [Dr. Robert M. Anderson, MD, MPH](#)

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 moderate to even life threatening diseases that are preventable, many that were once completely eradicated. Vaccinations are available for more than 15 various and deadly diseases including measles, mumps, chicken pox, yellow fever, malaria and tetanus<sup>1</sup>. Because of vaccines, many diseases that plagued children for centuries have all but been eliminated. According to many estimates, "vaccines may be the greatest public health achievement of the 20th century"<sup>2</sup>. Despite this, in the last decade there has been a resurgence of diseases such as measles and whooping cough<sup>3</sup>. How is this possible and how can the topic of vaccinations ever be debated? 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<sup>4</sup>.

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

Why am I offended? As a doctor my job is to provide parents and the public in general with my educated advice based on 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 or that is a personal effort to my profession. Additionally, the fact that some people feel that the interests, best friends or their neighbors, those with no medical degree can provide them with more sound medical advice is truly insulting to me. For the sake of your child's health and the health of others, please vaccinate.

1. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_preventable\\_diseases](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_preventable_diseases)

2. [Achievements in Public Health, 1900-1999: Control of Infectious Diseases. MMWR. 2000;48\(16\):359-368.](http://www.cdc.gov/od/oc/media/pressroom/stories/2007/07/070707a.htm)

3. [Study notes vaccine refusal is due to measles, pertussis. MMWR. 2010;58\(48\):1285-1288.](http://www.cdc.gov/od/oc/media/pressroom/stories/2010/10/101010a.htm)

4. [The MMR vaccine and autism: Denial, refutation, retraction, and fraud. Salkymedical.com. Feb 23, 2011. Archived 12/20/11. <http://www.cdc.gov/od/oc/media/pressroom/stories/2010/03/100310a.htm>](http://www.cdc.gov/od/oc/media/pressroom/stories/2010/03/100310a.htm)

Poll: Who has tried the  
“Role Play” twist?







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## Instructor: Rachel Portinga



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 needs 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.



## Finding top student

John England posted Jan 22, 2019 8:02 AM

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?

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Order: Threaded



John England

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.

The solution 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.

[Reply](#)



January 21 at 11:21 AM

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. You 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:

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

Reply

January 22 at 1:01 PM

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?

```
public static String getHighestScore() {  
    double highest_score = 0;  
    String highest_scoring_student = "";  
    for (Student 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?





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## Instructor: John Boyland



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 market data from your customers. Acme Software Company then sells the collected data to multiple clients, including your competitors. Given this situation, prepare and discuss what you would expect to be the outcome in the domain of "degree of differentiation" of product offerings in 2 to 3 years after using the collected data.

If my company is working with the same set of data produced by Acme Software Company I expect 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 white grass, 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 focus in fitness tracker companies trying to "keep up with Jones". If green is in, they better have green. In fact to keep up with the market they may not even do it very well. As time goes on competitors will need to react or face backlash as a result of not executing a new strategy well (like we often see 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 IM made fitness trackers it would make perfect sense for them to go after more health-conscious individuals versus a specific population, such as white females ages 21-40. (Hospitality by company means all products all the time from IM. When I hear IM I do not think of office supplies. I think of medical supplies. IM 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 instrumental in the success of strategy they begin to plan longer-term investment in data collection. Applied Predictive Technologies was such a large help to Chob's that it became part of Chob's vocabulary (Buckley, 2017). "Did you see that through, APT?"

Poll: Who has tried the  
“Hypothetical  
Situation” twist?





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Instructor: Peter Stark



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.



Apr 27, 2018 2:41 PM

The most obvious fault in design to me would be the color scheme, makes it almost unreadable in certain parts.

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

Next, 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.

Next, to me it is obvious that the green is start and the red is stop (would assume), but some are overlapping 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 unclear 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.”

Poll: Who has tried the  
“Bad Design” twist?





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## Instructor: Lisa Landgraf



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



Let's Twist!



# 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.



# Group Discussion

- Share answers to reflection question(s)
- How can we use discussions to facilitate critical thinking, engagement, and connection?
- What other discussion alternative techniques have you tried?



# Q & A



# Thank You!

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