

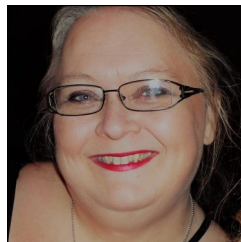
# Assessment Case Study

## Articulating learning: The use of debating as an assessment task

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**Course:** BA in Early Years Learning and Development

**Module:** 206 HSC – Theoretical Perspectives on Child Development **Student Level:** Undergraduate (Level 5)



### AN EXAMPLE OF ASSESSMENT THAT INVOLVES...

- Group work assessment
- Summative feedback
- Peer feedback
- An inclusive approach
- An authentic approach

### OVERVIEW

In this module, students participate in a **recorded debate in small groups**. Each group debates a topic regarding contemporary theories and perspectives in early childhood education. The debate lasts between 12-20 minutes. Students present academic opinions based on evidence from recent peer-reviewed journal articles.

This approach enables students to **articulate their learning** to another. Although the brief says “Each student will have 5 minutes to contribute to the debate”, tutors encourage this to be done in the true spirit of a debate, rather than a turn taking exercise.

### ACTIONS

Students sit in a circle and are recorded from two separate angles to maintain a comfortable learning space but ensure all participants are captured.

Students are **marked individually** on their performance within the debate; the interaction and the counter discussions as a reaction to the point previously made. This assessment is about team work as much as personal performance, monitoring individuals’ input and inviting in participants if interaction is uneven. The interjections must be both valid and appropriate there is no room for domination of conversations.

### RATIONALE

A key reason for taking this approach was to embrace different skills and learning styles. The aim was to create a more **level playing field** for students who might find it difficult to write in a reflective/academic manner (for example, students with dyslexia), but are competent in explaining the learning to each other. This is a skill needed



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for their future professional practice. The debate’s opportunity for a dialogue represents an **inclusive approach** to assessment.

### IMPACT

Having implemented it once, the positive **feedback and active engagement** by the students illustrated that this is an impactful experience for them.

Having consulted with students and colleagues, the team made some enhancements, such as having the students sit in circles (rather than behind desks). This helped to create a more realistic and natural feel to the debating process.

### SUSTAINABLE, SCALABLE OR TRANSFERABLE?

This approach is **transferable to many different contexts**. The course team have discussed bringing their students (from Health and Social Care) and together with Law students to add another dimension. They are considering replicating a typical court case involving Health and Social Care professionals in a “court room”.

The module’s current class size is up to 40 students, but the approach would be feasible for a larger class as long as room allocation and equipment available. In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, the debate approach was trialled in an **online environment**, within a Zoom class session which was recorded. This also worked well, with certain factors such as camera angles less of an issue. It does however reduce the face to face interactions within the group, where social cues are lacking.

The activity is also transferable to **professional practice**; for example, the skills used in this assessment would be applicable to team meetings, collaboration or multi-agency working. Hence this is an **authentic approach** to assessment.

### STUDENT FEEDBACK

#### Student comments:

- “I felt that seeing the subject from other people’s point of view helped my understanding”
- “It felt a bit like peer reviewing.”
- “I like how natural it felt.”

### MESSAGE TO PEERS

The tutor reflects that playing and replaying the video can be time consuming, but that the overall the benefits of the debate make this effort worthwhile.

**EXTRACT FROM ASSESSMENT BRIEF:** see next page

## EXTRACT FROM ASSESSMENT BRIEF

*Articulating learning: The use of debating as an assessment task*

*In addition to this assessment brief, students are also provided with assessment guidance and a marking rubric*



### Assessment Brief

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Module Title: Theoretical Perspectives on Child Development

Module Code: 206HSC



Assessment Type: Academic Debate Coursework	Assessment Number: 1	Study Mode: FT	Weighting: 40%
Submission Date: 09/10/2020	Submission Time: 18:00	Campus: CUC-CUL-CUS	

Introduction:

This module builds on work undertaken in the first year as a range of classic and contemporary theories concerning the development of children are explored. Students will consider how these different perspectives have developed and how they have influenced early years practice and pedagogy. Analysis and evaluation of theory is central to this module and students will use this to develop a critical, questioning approach to their studies.

Completion of this assignment will address the following learning outcomes:

1	Analyse a range of postmodern perspectives on child development and early years learning.
2	Compare and contrast postmodern theories with classic theories of child development knowledge.
3	Describe cultural differences in early years pedagogical practices based on new theoretical perspectives.

**Task:**

Students will engage in a recorded academic journal debate with their peers about an aspect of early years practice. Each student will have 5 minutes to contribute to the debate and will also submit a reflection on the subject under discussion which will be between 500 – 750 words.