

## **Policy Debate Training: A Technique to Enrich Political Discourse in The United States**

Steiner, Rebecca J.

*University of Georgia, Georgia, USA*

Panetta, Edward M.

*University of Georgia, Georgia, USA*

In their recent New York Times essay, Jonathan Ellis & Francesca Hovagimian declare that policy debate training is not “good for our politics.” There are many elements of policy debate training that occur outside of the actual competition ignored by Ellis & Hovagimian in their critique of the activity. Their criticism ignores policy debate’s ability to teach students to interrogate facts, develop community building skills, and in many cases spark a life-long passion for policy issues. Essential component of robust political discourse are the capacities of formulate sophisticated argument strategies and forcefully debate them in a competitive environment. These talents are forged by rigorous policy debate training. In short, policy debate is a complex argumentative community which effectively trains students to positively contribute to public life.

### **INTRODUCTION**

In October 2019, Jonathan Ellis and Francesca Hovagimian’s New York Times editorial article posed the often-asked question, “Are Debate Competitions Bad for US Political Discourse?” Opinion articles such as this one circulate in a larger genre many argumentation scholars refer to as “Quit Lit.” Their essay introduces problems with scholastic, competitive debate tournaments. Our essay offers a rebuttal to their article and a defense of policy debate competitions. We regard debate competitions to be a perpetual and dynamic process of social construction, maintenance, and change, rather than an isolated product of one or a few tournament speech presentations. We argue Ellis and Hovagimian’s critique captures only a snapshot of tournament competition which misses three valuable parts of scholastic policy debate: fact interrogation, community building, and development of life-long passions. These three benefits demonstrate scholastic intercollegiate debate is good for

United States political deliberation, as well as individuals’ intellectual growth and development.

### **FACT INTERROGATION**

In the current political moment, one of policy debate’s greatest benefits is allowing students the opportunity to participate in repeated, research-intensive exercises to learn how to build arguments supported by evidence. It is well known that we are already in a “post-truth” era in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.\*1 In a fact-free world, teaching young students to debate using a switch-side debating format is essential to protect democratic principles and teach younger generations how to evaluate evidence in important public controversies. There are in many contexts important operating principles, which function as facts which allow for a robust discussion of public policy matters. In this section we defend policy debate’s immense value

as research driven, evidence-based policy debate against Ellis and Hovagimian's accusation that "school debate" is merely technique driven rhetoric.

First, because of the research intensity, switch-side policy debate teaches students how to evaluate evidence in public controversies. As Star Muir (1993) explains, switch-side debate is not simply a matter of speaking persuasively or organizing ideas clearly (although it does involve these), but of understanding and mobilizing arguments to make an effective case. Proponents of debating both sides observe that the debaters should prepare the best possible case they can, given the facts and information available to them.\*2 This process, at its core, involves critical assessment and evaluation of arguments.\*3 Similarly, O'Donnell et. al (2010) argue policy debate teaches analytical skills, whereby students practice identifying errors in reasoning and proof, recognizing inconsistencies in arguments, assessing the credibility of sources, challenging assumptions, and prioritizing the salience of points. Policy debate encourages debaters and judges to arrive at conclusions based on a careful examination of fact and reason.

Second, switch side policy debate teaches students how to evaluate the best policy options in a public controversy. The guiding debate topic example in Ellis and Hovagimian's article was the proposition "recreational drug use should be legalized." Policy debate does not teach students to necessarily approach that topic as a yes/no question. As debaters analyze the potential affirmative cases and the potential negative cases, including the possibility of negative counter plans, they begin to realize the complexity of most contemporary problems. They learn not only that most problems of contemporary affairs have more than one side, but also that even one side of a proposition embodies a considerable range of values. A student slated "against" the recreational drug legalization topic may advocate a counter proposal for how to best achieve legalizing recreational drugs. In this case, both teams find themselves largely in agreement about the controversy/topic and that action must be taken to depart from the status quo, but disagree on the best research method, framework, philosophy or policy to address to address a common public problem. Thus, switch side

policy debate gives students opportunities to offer justifications for one's own views and actions, but also to listen to criticisms, objections, and the justificatory reasons that can be given in favor of alternative proposals.\*4

Third, switch side policy debate teaches students skills to find the best available research to use in a debate about a timely, public controversy. Interscholastic policy debate coaches often teach middle and high school students how to use library e-databases such as Lexis Nexis, ProQuest, and JSTOR to find academic articles and law reviews to help support their arguments, whereas the average American does not learn how to use these databases until they are enrolled in college. Policy debate coaches encourage their students to read scholarly, academic journal articles and philosophy books at a young age to help prepare for upcoming debate competitions. Policy debaters are also taught how to conduct efficient internet searches with specialized advance search tools including tilde operators, minus operators, searching by recency, and more.

One of Ellis and Hovagimian's critiques is that "school debate" rewards biased reasoning. In this section, we argue policy debate does quite the opposite: it is evidence-based and rewards critical thinking, empathy, and self-reflection. First, one unique aspect of policy debate is that students must research a broad problem area for an entire season, which means students are engaged in research for several months and learn to deeply interrogate a question over time. The year-long interrogation of a topic area is a particularly distinctive approach to learning in the current moment. All too often in the Age of Twitter, people move quickly from controversy to controversy developing intellectual breadth at the expense of depth of understanding. Beyond tournament competition, students meet in classrooms during or after school for debate team meetings. Team meetings are places and times when students can sharpen both research and critical thinking skills by working with coaches and teammates to prepare strategies for many dimensions of a broad research question.

Instead of rewarding bias, team meetings often involve students learning new perspectives from other team members and coaches who approach the debate topic from different frames

of reference. Esberg and Sagan's (2012) research explains that although students often have a pre-defined view of international affairs, the literature on simulations in education has long emphasized speech and debate exercises force students to challenge their own assumptions about how governments behave and how their own government works.\*5 Policy debate thus allows students a forum to actively research their government's positions and actively argue, brief, and negotiate with others. Facts can change quickly in our current political moment, but policy debate teaches students how to contextualize and act on information. Even if a student has a bias towards a particular political party or mode of reasoning at the first meeting, repeated team meetings over the course of a season encourages open-mindedness by helping them to appreciate the complexities involved in policy dilemmas and normalizing that students are allowed to change their opinions after learning new information.\*6 Effective squad meetings are inclusive moments where students listen to potential strengths and weaknesses of strategies that could be deployed in debates. The component of the policy debate experience is one ignored by Ellis and Hovagimian in their critique of our activity.

Another critique in Ellis and Hovagimian's article is that "school debate" discourages listening and reasoning in favor of learning to pounce on something the opponent said and use that to win. In this section, we argue debate teaches students how to converse and deliberate with those whom they disagree. First, students know that in order to be successful, they must listen to their partner, their opponents, and a judge. Students are evaluated by judges in large part based on how responsive they are to the claims made by the opponents. If a student does not carefully listen to all the opponent's claims, actively take notes during the opponent speeches, and make direct responses in their later speeches, the conversation about the proposition being debated will not advance and they are also likely to lose the debate. In this respect, there are many reasons to listen to the opponent with whom they disagree and understand their reasoning. Since there is a judge, students must take care to learn how to deliberate with those they disagree (the

opponents), but also with a neutral or undecided judge.

Rather than discourage listening, there is more evidence suggesting switch side policy debating is critical for students to develop empathy for their opponents' position. Since debaters are forced to switch sides, they go into each debate knowing that a non-personal mindset will be necessary at some point because they will inevitably be forced to argue against their own convictions.\*7 Students realize that they must listen and understand their opponent's arguments well enough to become advocates on behalf of them in future debates.\*8 Knowing that over the course of any given tournament students will inevitably debate both sides of the same resolution inculcates a deep-seated attitude of tolerance and empathy toward differing points of view. If students only debated one side of a topic, that style of debate would lead to an ego-identification with that side and the close-mindedness the Ellis and Hovagimian critique.\*9 If only debating one side, any other sides in contrast are seen only as something to be discredited. Thus, Ellis and Hovagimian's critique of policy debate as it exists today is inaccurate.

Furthermore, we believe switch side debate promotes self-reflective thought and anti-dogmatism. The switch side format means that sometimes students have to be on a side they do not personally agree with, but also that they learn that investigating the other position is a way to explore one's personal view.\*10 To argue from opposing points of view not only helps to identify weakness and limitations in one's own position, but also helps with the development of self-reflective thought. Students transition from holding fixed, static ideas to an attitude of doubt and questioning engendered by exposure to alternative views in social discourse.\*11 Clinging to the certainty of one's beliefs risks dogmatism, rigidity, and the inability to learn from new experiences. Keller et. al (2001) found that participation in a debate stimulates clarification and critical evaluation of the evidence, logic, and values underlying one's own policy position.

No matter which side a policy debater is currently debating at a tournament in real-time, debaters know that they have to be prepared to

switch for their next debate. Flexibility to switch requires the process of self-examination by which one at various moments rethinks and revises one's views in light of encounters with new arguments and new considerations by one's fellow deliberators.\*12 Further, it imposes an obligation to continue to test their own views, seeking forums in which the views can be challenged, and keeping open the possibility of their revision or even rejection. Without switching, Talisse (2005) explains, polarization occurs. If we do not engage opposing views, but instead deliberate only with those with whom we agree, our view will shift progressively to a more extreme point.\*13 In order to avoid polarization, deliberation must take place within heterogeneous arguments pools.\*14 In the next section we develop how these heterogeneous argument pools have another benefit as well: building community.

## COMMUNITY BUILDING

A tournament competition is one performance or a few isolated performances, but being part of a team that competes in tournament competitions is a life experience. Ellis and Hovagimian focus on critiquing individuals, but forget that those individuals are, in many cases, part of a larger squad. Much like in team sports, there is a significant amount of time spent working on skills besides the debate tournament competition. During the entire school year, before, and after tournament competition students continue working on debating skills. Therefore, the snapshot presented in Ellis and Hovagimian's critique is not an accurate representation of being part of a debate team. In this section we argue one of the benefits of policy debate is community building. Policy debate training teaches students valuable important social skills and teamwork skills.

First, policy debate teaches students important social skills. Students can make friends with students from other schools at summer debate workshops and tournament competition. Students also form bonds with students from their own school in team meetings and practices. Over time, debaters begin to consciously become part of a community and team. The friendships students develop are not on display at all times at

any given tournament performance. Debate encourages students to meet new people each weekend, practice making small talk, find common ground and interests, and talk about their opinions and research on the pressing policy issues of our time. When debaters feel part of a team, they are more likely to feel appreciated and derive intangible benefits such as feelings of self-worth, happiness, and contentment. This provides young students stimulation, a sense of achievement, and intellectual learning. Because of the win-loss nature of policy debate, much like sports, students also celebrate together as a team when the team performs well over the course of a season. The social aspects of policy debate are one of the top reasons many policy debate programs both retain students each year and attract newcomers to the activity.

Second, policy debate teaches students important teamwork skills. Student competing in policy debate have a partner who they compete with at a tournament. Students also work in research teams amongst their own squad prior to a competition. Joining together, speaking in front of a group, listening to others in a research group, and collaborating on academic research are regular parts of the teamwork necessary to win policy debate competitions. Students are taught at an early age the importance of deadlines, responsibility, and accountability to complete assigned work and contribute to the team research effort. Eijkman's research (2012) demonstrates that policy debate research and practice debates have the power to stimulate creativity, and is one of the most engaging and liberating ways for making group work productive, challenging and enjoyable.

Once students begin to develop social and teamwork skills, policy debate also helps them develop important insights as a team about how to deliberate with others. Students on each team must work together to build and refine arguments that compellingly asserts their position on policy issues confronting the world.\*15 As a team, they gain greater insight into the real-world legal dilemmas faced by policy makers.\*16 As they work with other members of their team, they realize the complexities of applying and implementing laws.\*17 Dickson (2004) reports students enjoy this element of debating in school, especially as part of a team effort, and they feel

empowered by becoming knowledgeable on a subject that the outside world has been debating as well. Students feel grown-up, discussing issues their parents and legislators might discuss and knowing that they are conversant on the subject.\*18 In the next section, we discuss how the communities debaters are building do not end at the competition, but rather extend to their cities and life's work.

## DEVELOPMENT OF LIFE LONG PASSIONS

In addition to debate's value as it pertains to community building and fact interrogation, scholastic and intercollegiate debate is immensely valuable towards the development of one's life-long passions. Ellis and Hovagimian's critique ignores the turn to civic engagement that has taken place in the policy debate community over the course of the last twenty-five years. In this section, we develop the ways basic argumentation skills are taught by policy debaters to middle schoolers and students who attend high school in less affluent communities. We also consider policy debate's function in training students in the modern world and professional occupations.

First, some schools in the United States now offer speech and debate as an elective class or after school program for middle schoolers. According to research from Bauschard and Rao (2015), middle school students who participate in speech and debate gain numerous public speaking and argumentation skills. Through learning these skills, they also develop many other academic skills and have the opportunity to grow as individuals as they develop from children into adults.\*19 There is a growing body of research that demonstrates participation in debating competition promotes a host of fundamental skills that lead to academic and personal success.\*20 Teaching middle school students policy debate offers students the opportunity at a very early age to address multiple sides of a topic, which helps them to develop empathy and understand the perspective of others. Research produced by Rogers (2002, 2005) indicates there is evidence that the switch side format of debating helps young debaters become more socially tolerant.\*21

Second, over the last twenty-five years in the United States, the debate community has encouraged the creation and expansion of debate opportunities in urban areas, often called urban debate leagues. To take only a snapshot of tournament competition as the basis for evaluation of the activity, the way Ellis & Hovagimian do, does not capture the influence of urban debate leagues to provide academic enrichment and extracurricular programming across under-resourced high school students. To assess the impact of the Chicago Urban Debate League, academic researchers Mezuk et. al (2011) applied statistical analysis to compare debaters to similar students who did not participate in debate. Mezuk et. al (2011) found that students who participated in the Chicago Debate League were "significantly more likely" to graduate from high school than comparable non-debaters. Debating in the Chicago Debate League led to gains in grade-point average every semester a student continued to debate.\*22 In contrast, GPA remained flat overall for high school students not involved in debate.\*23 After adjusting for demographic and risk variables, debaters in every risk group were more likely than non-debaters to reach the college-readiness benchmark on the English, Reading, and Science sections of the ACT.\*24

Similarly, the New York Urban Debate League also shows tremendous value for at-risk students. Winkler's research (2011) demonstrates after-school debate programs often focus on oral reading activities and competitions against other students from other schools. In New York, these programs successfully provide below-grade-level readers a low-risk way to improve vocabulary, increase fluency, and enhance reading comprehension.\*25 Bellon's (2000) research from the Atlanta Urban Debate League similarly documents a connection between debate participation and decreased violence in turning previous gang members into cooperative students. These three urban debate leagues are only a sample of many in the fantastic work of urban debate leagues across the country. We would be remiss if we didn't point out that work in Urban Debate programs adds to the development and personal growth of the many Intercollegiate debaters across the country who contribute to the programs.

Third, debate offers many benefits long after high school is over and individuals enroll in college, graduate school, and begin their professional careers or “life’s work.” For instance, Xu (2018) explained on the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) graduate school website that policy debate helped her prepare for graduate school and a career in computer science. She believes the research skills she learned initially from policy debate helped prepare her to do advanced computer science research and literature reviews today in graduate school.\*26 She also explains the argument organization skills she learned from debate helps her organize pro-STEM education and funding arguments in her grant proposals today and anticipate common counter arguments.\*27 Lastly, the experience of losing debates and hearing judge feedback helped prepare her for manuscript and conference rejections and how to improve her arguments to revise them.\*28

In addition to preparing students to excel at college and graduate school, policy debate trains to prepare students for civic engagement in the modern world. One prominent example is the 2008 Water Wars Debates hosted at the US Environment Protection Agency. These policy debates were a product of U.S. government agencies collaborating with outside scholars to untangle disparate threads of knotty technoscientific issues, in part by integrating structured debating exercises into institutional decision-making processes such as intelligence assessment and public policy planning.\*29 The tournament style competition featured college policy debaters from a variety of universities such as Wake Forest University, Michigan State University, and the University of Mary Washington. After the policy debates were over, the EPA reported arguments from the debates contributed positively to internal EPA deliberation on a variety of science and environment issues.\*30

Gordon Mitchell (2010) explains the success of these debates on EPA deliberation were not because of the “rhetoric” and “delivery” type of techniques that Ellis and Hovagimian suggest, but rather because of classical Greece rhetorical concept *dissoi logoi*, or pulling apart complex questions by debating two sides of an issue. In short, *dissoi logoi* was Protagoras’ principle that

two accounts (*logoi*) are present about every ‘thing,’ opposed to each other, and humans can “measure” the relative soundness of knowledge claims by engaging in give-and-take where parties would make the “weaker argument stronger” to activate the generative aspect of rhetorical practice, a key element of the Sophistical tradition.\*31 Building on Protagoras, Isocrates incorporated the Protagorean *dissoi logoi* into *synerchesthe*, a broader concept that he used flexibly to express interlocking senses of inquiry, as in groups convening to search for answers to common questions through discussion; deliberation, with interlocutors gathering in a political setting to deliberate about proposed courses of action; and alliance formation, the exchange of pledges that deepen social ties.\*32 Mitchell (2010) explains the policy debates at the EPA succeeded because they were a perfect example of these rhetorical techniques such as deliberative alliance building, the performative task of coming together deliberately for the purpose of joint inquiry, collective choice-making, and renewal of communicative bonds).

Lastly, although Ellis and Hovagimian spend the bulk of their article discussing how debate trains future politicians, one of the more likely career paths for former debaters is the legal field. Many policy debate skills easily translate to those with aspirations of attending law school and becoming a lawyer. Intercollegiate policy debate coach John Katsulas (2000) explains the major areas policy debate can help future lawyers excel are: critical thinking to quickly understand arguments, coming to grips with opponents’ arguments and forecasting how the judge might evaluate both positions.\*33 Further, a survey directed to 82 prominent lawyers who were former debaters asking about the benefits of collegiate debating revealed strong support for the belief that debate taught them skills in oral advocacy, critical thinking, brief writing, research, and listening.\*34 Acquiring research skills was ranked as the second greatest benefit of debate participation by those surveyed.\*35

## CONCLUSION

To review, when considering Ellis and Hovagimian's question "Are Debate Competitions Bad for US Political Discourse?" we answered with a resounding "No!" Their critique misses the mark on some of the most valuable aspects of debate that cannot be observed by using only a few school debate tournament competition speeches as an example. Rather, policy debate's enduring value must be evaluated as a process, over time. Our research here is not an exhaustive or comprehensive discussion and we welcome further research on the subject. Our preliminary conclusions are that participation in scholastic and especially policy debate has tremendous benefits for fact interrogation, community building, and the development of life-long passions. Policy debate is a complex argumentative community which effectively trains students to positively contribute to United States political discourse on issues of public concern and to make meaningful changes in their communities.

## NOTES

- \*1. Biesecker, B.A. (2018). "Guest Editor's Introduction: Toward an Archaeogenealogy of Post-truth." *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 51.4, 331.
- \*2. Muir, S.A. (1993). "A Defense of the Ethics of Contemporary Debate," *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 26.4, pp. 277-295.
- \*3. Muir, 1993, 277-295.
- \*4. Talisse, R. (2005). "Deliberativist Responses to Activist Challenges: A Continuation of Young's Dialectic," *Philosophy Social Criticism*, 31.4, pp. 423-444.
- \*5. Esberg, J. & S. Sagan. (2012). "NEGOTIATING NONPROLIFERATION: Scholarship, Pedagogy, and Nuclear Weapons Policy." *The Nonproliferation Review*, 19.1, pp. 95-108.
- \*6. Keller, T.E. & J.K. Whittaker, T.K. Burke. (2001). "Student Debates in Policy Courses: Promoting Policy Practice Skills and Knowledge Through Active Learning." *Journal of Social Work Education*, 37.2, pp. 343-355.
- \*7. Muir, 1993, 289.
- \*8. Strait, P. & B. Wallace. (2007). "The Scope of Negative Fiat and the Logic of Decision Making," Policy Cures? Health Assistance to Africa, *Wake Forest University Debaters Research Guide*.
- \*9. Muir, 1993, 277-295.
- \*10. Dickson, R. (2004). "Developing "Real-World Intelligence": Teaching Argumentative Writing through Debate." *The English Journal*, 94.1, pp. 34-40.
- \*11. Keller et. al., 2001, 343-355.
- \*12. Talisse, 2005, 423-444.
- \*13. Talisse, 2005, 423-444. See also: Poscher, R. (2016). "Why We Argue About the Law: An Agonistic Account of Legal Disagreement," *Metaphilosophy of Law*, ed. Gizbert-Studnicki, Dyrda, Banas, [http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2734689](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2734689)
- \*14. Talisse, 2005, 423-444.
- \*15. Joyner, C.C. (1999). "Teaching International Law: Views from an International Relations Political Scientist." *ILSA Journal of International & Comparative Law* 5, pp. 377.
- \*16. Joyner, 1999, 377.
- \*17. Joyner, 1999, 377.
- \*18. Dickson, 2004, 34-40.
- \*19. Bauschard, S. & A. Rao. (2015). "The Value of Speech and Debate in the Middle School Years." *NSDA Rostrum*, 60-64.
- \*20. Bauschard & Rao, 2015, 60-64.
- \*21. Bauschard & Rao, 2015, 60-64. Also see: Rogers, J.E. (2002). "Longitudinal outcome assessment for forensics: Does participation in intercollegiate competitive forensics contribute to measurable differences in positive student outcomes?" *Contemporary Argumentation and Debate*, 23, pp. 1-27. Rogers, J.E. (2005). "Graduate school, professional, and life choices: An outcome assessment confirmation study measuring positive student outcomes beyond student experiences for participants in competitive intercollegiate forensics." *Contemporary Argumentation and Debate*, 26, pp. 13-40.
- \*22. Mezuk, B. & I. Bondarenko, S. Smith, E. Tucker. (2011). "Impact of Participating in a Policy Debate Program on Academic Achievement: Evidence for the Chicago Urban Debate League," *Educational Research and Reviews*, 6.9, pp. 622-635.
- \*23. Mezuk et. al., 2011, 622-635.
- \*24. Mezuk et. al., 2011, 622-635.
- \*25. Winkler, C. (2011). "To Argue or to Fight: Improving At-risk Students' School Conduct through Urban Debate." *Controversia* 7.2, pp. 76-91.
- \*26. Xu, H. (2018). "Policy Debate vs. Research: Applying High School Debate Skills to PhD Research." *MIT Graduate Admissions Blog*. <https://gradadmissions.mit.edu/blog/policy-debate-vs-research?fbclid=IwAR0uTHjwhsJJ-xGVtCsO2TN8XWafkibUqFTqxTwORUq5ofDfqXG3ATrBAW4>
- \*27. Xu, 2018.
- \*28. Xu, 2018.
- \*29. Mitchell, G.R. (2010). "Switch-side Debating Meets Demand-driven Rhetoric of Science." *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, 13.1, pp. 95-120.
- \*30. Mitchell, 2010, 95-120.
- \*31. Mitchell, 2010, 95-120.

- \*32. Mitchell, 2010, 95-120.
- \*33. Katsulas, J. & S. Bauschard. (2000). "Debate as Preparation for the Legal Profession: A Survey of Debaters from the 1970s to 1990s." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the *Southern States Communication Association*, New Orleans, LA, March 29-April 2, 2000.
- \*34. Katsulas & Bauschard, 2000.
- \*35. Katsulas & Bauschard, 2000.

## REFERENCES

- Bauschard, S. & A. Rao. (2015). "The Value of Speech and Debate in the Middle School Years." *NSDA Rostrum*, 60-64.
- Biesecker, B.A. (2018). "Guest Editor's Introduction: Toward an Archaeogenealogy of Post-truth." *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 51.4, pp. 329-341.
- Bellon, J. (2000). "A Research-based Justification for Debate Across the Curriculum." *Argumentation and Advocacy* 36.3, pp. 161-175.
- Dickson, R. (2004). "Developing "Real-World Intelligence": Teaching Argumentative Writing through Debate." *The English Journal*, 94.1, pp. 34-40.
- Eijkman, H.S. (2012). "The Role of Simulations in the Authentic Learning for National Security Policy Development: Implications for Practice." Australia National University, [http://nsc.anu.edu.au/test/documents/Sims\\_in\\_authentic\\_learning\\_report.pdf](http://nsc.anu.edu.au/test/documents/Sims_in_authentic_learning_report.pdf)
- Ellis, J. & F. Hovagimian. (2019). "Are School Debate Competitions Bad for Our Political Discourse?" *New York Times*, October 12, <https://nyti.ms/35vYpc2>
- Esberg, J. & S. Sagan. (2012). "NEGOTIATING NONPROLIFERATION: Scholarship, Pedagogy, and Nuclear Weapons Policy." *The Nonproliferation Review*, 19.1, pp. 95-108.
- Joyner, C.C. (1999). "Teaching International Law: Views from an International Relations Political Scientist." *ILSA Journal of International & Comparative Law* 5, pp. 377-387.
- Katsulas, J. & S. Bauschard. (2000). "Debate as Preparation for the Legal Profession: A Survey of Debaters from the 1970s to 1990s." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the *Southern States Communication Association*, New Orleans, LA, March 29-April 2, 2000.
- Keller, T.E. & J.K. Whittaker, T.K. Burke. (2001). "Student Debates in Policy Courses: Promoting Policy Practice Skills and Knowledge Through Active Learning." *Journal of Social Work Education*, 37.2, pp. 343-355.
- Mezuk, B. & I. Bondarenko, S. Smith, E. Tucker. (2011). "Impact of Participating in a Policy Debate Program on Academic Achievement: Evidence for the Chicago Urban Debate League," *Educational Research and Reviews*, 6.9, pp. 622-635.
- Mitchell, G.R. (2010). "Switch-side Debating Meets Demand-driven Rhetoric of Science." *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, 13.1, pp. 95-120.
- Muir, S.A. (1993). "A Defense of the Ethics of Contemporary Debate," *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 26.4, pp. 277-295.
- O'Donnell, T. & N. Butt, S. Bauschard, J. Bellon, W. Decker, J. Kastulas, W. Keith, J. Lyle, D. Verney O'Gorman, and J. Packer. (2010). "A Rationale for Intercollegiate Debate in the Twenty-first Century," in *Navigating Opportunity: Policy Debate in the 21st Century* (ed. Allan Loudon), International Debate Education Association.
- Poscher, R. (2016). "Why We Argue About the Law: An Agonistic Account of Legal Disagreement," *Metaphilosophy of Law*, ed. Gizbert-Studnicki, Dyrda, Banas, [http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2734689](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2734689)
- Rogers, J.E. (2002). "Longitudinal outcome assessment for forensics: Does participation in intercollegiate competitive forensics contribute to measurable differences in positive student outcomes?" *Contemporary Argumentation and Debate*, 23, pp. 1-27.
- Rogers, J.E. (2005). "Graduate school, professional, and life choices: An outcome assessment confirmation study measuring positive student outcomes beyond student experiences for participants in competitive intercollegiate forensics." *Contemporary Argumentation and Debate*, 26, pp. 13-40.
- Strait, P. & B. Wallace. (2007). "The Scope of Negative Fiat and the Logic of Decision Making," *Policy Cures? Health Assistance to Africa, Wake Forest University Debaters Research Guide*.
- Talisie, R. (2005). "Deliberativist Responses to Activist Challenges: A Continuation of Young's Dialectic," *Philosophy Social Criticism*, 31.4, pp. 423-444.
- Winkler, C. (2011). "To Argue or to Fight: Improving At-risk Students' School Conduct through Urban Debate." *Controversia* 7.2, pp. 76-91.
- Xu, H. (2018). "Policy Debate vs. Research: Applying High School Debate Skills to PhD Research." *MIT Graduate Admissions Blog*. <https://gradadmissions.mit.edu/blog/policy-debate-vs-research?fbclid=IwAR0uTHjwhsJJ-xGVtCsO2TN8XWafkibUqFTqxTwORUq5ofDfqXG3ATrBAW4>