

# Do Online Discussions Help Elementary Students Consider Multiple Perspectives?

Narmada Paul (PhD), Joslyn Porter, and Rest Aliu  
 P20 Motivation and Learning Lab, University of Kentucky  
 Email: narmada.paul@uky.edu

## BACKGROUND

- The ability to consider multiple perspectives is an important 21<sup>st</sup> century skill (Kuhn, 2020).
- Online discussion can improve the ability to consider multiple perspectives in essay writing in elementary students (Paul et al., under review).
- Students do not feel motivated to participate in online discussion (Xie & Huang, 2014).

## RESEARCH QUESTION

#RQ1: Does the ability to consider multiple perspectives in online discussion change over time?

#RQ2: Does the type of instruction impact the change in ability to consider multiple perspectives in online discussion?

## PARTICIPANTS

- 95 fourth grade students
- 64% White, 48% girls
- 4 social studies teachers
- All women teachers, 1 Biracial teacher, 3 White teachers



## RESEARCH DESIGN

Instructional Strategies	Control <i>n</i> = 48	Experimental <i>n</i> = 47
Model use of graphic organizer	Yes	Yes
Give option to suggest changes	No	Yes
Demonstrate real world relevance	No	Yes
Facilitate a whole class reflection	No	Yes

## SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM

Four instructional units each incorporating one online discussion.

Discussion 1: Should we stop cutting down trees?

Discussion 4: Should we allow immigrants and refugees to come into the United States?

## DATA AND CODING

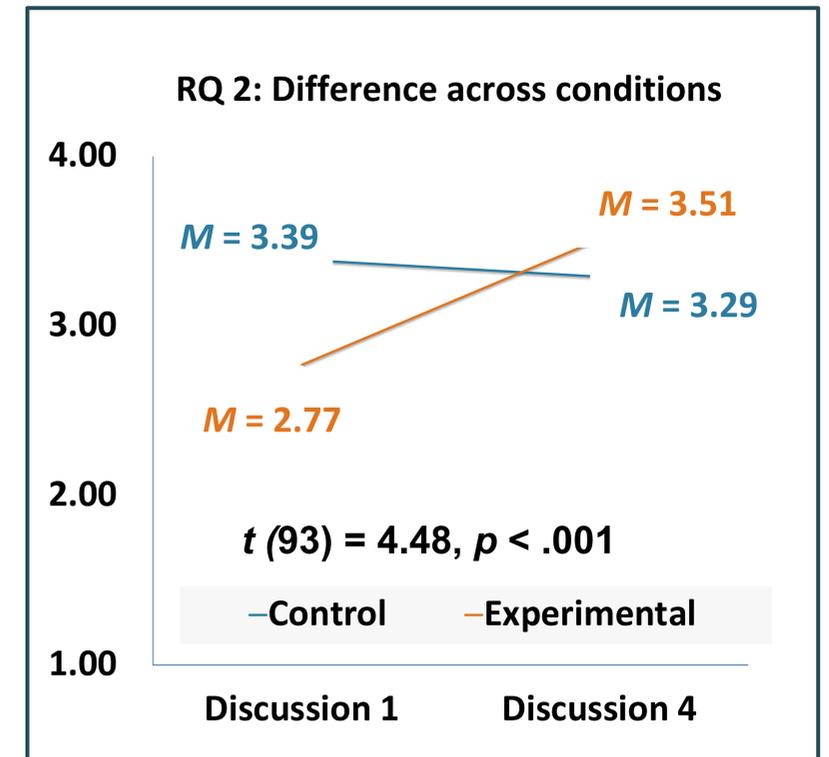
Discussion 1  
(first post)

Discussion 4  
(last post)

Code	Description
1	No argument
2	Own side only
3	Dual perspective
4	Integrated perspective

## ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

RQ 1: Overall, students showed improvement from Discussion 1 ( $M = 3.08$ ) to Discussion 4 ( $M = 3.40$ ),  $t(94) = 3.04$ ,  $p = .003$ .



## DISCUSSION

- Modeling the use of graphic organizer helped students develop the ability to integrate arguments in online discussion (Nussbaum, 2008).
- Supporting students' motivation to participate in online discussion through autonomy supportive strategies buffered against a decline in their ability to integrate perspectives (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

## REFERENCES

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Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2020). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation from a self-determination theory perspective: Definitions, theory, practices, and future directions. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2020.101860>

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