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Larry Ferlazzo **The Best Sites For Students To Create & Participate In Online Debates** **Oct 24 2009**

Posted at 9:35 am under [reading](#), [web 2.0](#), [writing](#)

I've been thinking of having students try to set-up and participate in an online debate that would involve both their classmates and others. It might be a good writing opportunity to prepare them for a persuasive essay, and a way to generate some high-interest reading possibilities as they prepare their positions.

I've been exploring what possible sites might be out there students can use. I'm narrowing them down but, since I haven't actually had them do this activity yet, I can't say positively which one is best. But I thought I'd share the conclusions I've reached after my initial experiments, and invite readers to share their experiences with these sites and others.

So, given that caveat, here are my choices for The Best Sites For Students To Create & Participate In Online Debates:

I like [Create Debate](#) a lot. One of its key advantages is that it appears to allow the creator of the debate to moderate the discussion. I'm imagining that a student can create the debate and that I then add it to the site under my name and within the initial prompt indicate which student started it. Then, they and others can contribute, but I can check regularly and delete any inappropriate comments made by others.

[Heads Up](#) seems to be an ideal site, and is specifically designed for students and teachers to use. However, it's designed for use in the United Kingdom. I haven't contacted them yet (but will soon) to see if non-UK schools can participate.


Two other sites – [Riled Up](#) and [For And Against](#) – appear to have some potential, but moderation of discussions on both sites seems very limited so I'd be concerned about using it in class.

[Procon](#) is not a site to participate in debates but, instead, offers what seems to be very well-researched pro and con positions on multiple controversial issues. It could serve as a good model for students to use as they craft their own positions.

[Debategraph](#) is in a category all its own. It looks like a cool way to visualize arguments, but I can't quite figure it out.

Additional suggestions and feedback are welcome.

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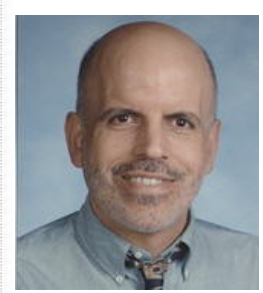
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Create & Participate In Online Debates”



PJVermont on 24 Oct 2009 at 10:40 am

Larry,

Thanks for the post. My class is starting a persuasive writing project on Monday, so I'm looking forward to checking these resources.

I checked out Procon a few weeks back. I agree, it can serve as a useful model for students. I'm leaning towards not using it, as I'm concerned the vocabulary is just too inaccessible for my sixth graders.

PJVermont

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