2018-2019

DISCUSSION PACKET

#Disco2019: The Impact of Media and Popular Culture on Society

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Overview of Discussion

“Problem-solving Discussion is an effort on the part of a small group to reach a solution to a problem through informal interchange of facts, inferences, and judgments. This method of discussion seeks consensus rather than majority rule. The focus of this event should be the encouragement of cooperation and critical thinking to arrive at the collective goal of better understanding and problem solving.” (MSHSL Rules and Policies Manual)

The purpose and goal of the category of Discussion is to help students learn critical thinking skills, what constitutes quality research, effective group communication tactics, and problem-solving techniques. Discussion emphasizes that participants utilize consensus building tools to accomplish their goals. Encouraging a thoughtful exchange of substantive information, positive group interactions, and full participation by all should be the goal of every coach, student, and judge involved in this category. Game-playing and confrontational verbal (or non-verbal) tactics should be dissuaded.

Overview of This Year’s Topic

The commonly accepted definition of media is: “the primary means of mass communication (broadcasting, publishing, and the Internet), regarded collectively.” While broad, that definition has some coherence. The definition of popular culture has a little more ambiguity: “culture based on the tastes of ordinary people rather than an educated elite.” In our day of globally-instantaneous communication and quickly-shifting cultural tastes, the impact of those two terms have, by some analyses, become essentially synonymous. Agree or disagree with that sentiment, it is difficult to argue that the two do not have a tremendous impact on global societal functions. This year’s topic will assess how the two are influencing the direction of society, both nationally and globally, and what can be done to lessen negative influences.
TASK INFORMATION

Tasks at Invitational Tournaments
While the Minnesota State High School League does not limit the use of topic areas used for Discussion at invitational speech tournaments, the Discussion Committee recommends the following schedule to give students experience with all parts of the outline:

- **Start of Regular Invitational Season – February 16: Section Topics**
- **February 17 – Last Regular Season Invitational: Subsection Topics**
- **State Tournament Tasks – Students should be prepared for tasks from both areas of the outline.**

**Tournament Managers Please Note:** Whether or not you choose to follow the above schedule, it is vital that you communicate to your participating schools which part(s) of the outline you will use and how you will be organizing your Discussion rounds.

Tasks at Subsection and Section Tournaments
Tasks for subsection and section tournaments will follow the procedure instituted in the 2016 season – Tournaments will no longer receive a full slate of tasks from which to choose. Instead they will receive a set of four or five tasks for those tournaments. Those tasks will be date specific (unique to one or two sets of tournaments) and will not be repeated at other tournaments.

While the actual tasks shall not be shared beforehand with teams competing at subsection or section tournaments, the specific outline sub-points used will be sent with the sets and must communicated to all coaches in your sub or section. For example – “Our subsection tournament will use Area 1, Sub-points A, C, D, J.”

Tasks at State Tournament
State tournament tasks will follow the same procedure as previous seasons. Separate sets will be written for each day and chosen at random for each round of competition. Participants should be prepared for tasks from both areas of the outline.
I. INDIVIDUAL/GROUP ISSUES (Section Topics)
   A. Doxing/swatting/similar forms of on & off-line Harassment.
   B. Unrealistic expectations/misrepresentations (body image, cultural diversity, socio-economic status).
   C. Shaming/being shamed (public dissemination of private behavior).
   D. Generational differences/difficulties.
   E. Groupthink/micro-societies/micro-targeting.
   F. Technologically-influenced disconnect from our surroundings.
   G. Protecting people from harm while still maintaining interconnectedness.
   H. Individual responsibility in verifying information (zombie misinformation)
   I. Culture of narcissism?
   J. What does the future hold?

II. ORGANIZATION/BUSINESS/GOVERNMENT ISSUES (Subsection Topics)
   A. Coping with unfair/unjustified negative publicity.
   B. Determining what is and is not “accurate” information.
   C. Organic social movements vs. interest group-driven movements.
   D. Generational differences/difficulties.
   E. Decline of “traditional” media (print newspapers, terrestrial radio, magazines)
   F. Coping with assertions of bias (media, publicity, policy).
   G. Consolidation of emerging means of communication/distribution of information.
   H. Access to information means (net neutrality vs. equitable access; geographical differences)
   I. Culture of proximity – Social experiential marketing (top down vs. bottom up)
   J. Content distribution – adapting to changing expectations and/or demands (Streaming services vs established, “cord” cutting)
The bibliography is intended as a starting point for researching this topic, with each sub-point having at least three citations. General interest web sites are listed at the end. It is not meant to be exhaustive and presents a fraction of the resources available to prepare for Discussion rounds. A source listed in one area may be applicable to other subtopic points.

I. INDIVIDUAL/GROUP ISSUES (Section Topic)

A. Doxxing/swatting/on & off-line harassment.

B. Unrealistic expectations/misrepresentations (body image, socioeconomic status).

C. Shaming/being shamed (public dissemination of private behavior).


D. Generational differences/difficulties (uses of, portrayals in)


E. Groupthink/micro-societies/micro-targeting


F. Technologically-influenced disconnect from our surroundings (digital detoxing, cocooning)


G. Protecting people from harm while still maintaining interconnectedness.


H. Individual responsibility in verifying information (fact-checking, zombie misinformation)


I. Culture of narcissism?


4. “Researchers say we have a 'narcissism epidemic'. So what's causing it?” *Big Think*, 9 February 2018. [https://bigthink.com/design-for-good/your-culture-affects-how-narcissistic-you-are](https://bigthink.com/design-for-good/your-culture-affects-how-narcissistic-you-are)


J. What does the future hold?


II. ORGANIZATION/BUSINESS/GOVERNMENT ISSUES (Subsection Topics)

A. Coping with unfair/unjustified negative publicity.

B. Determining what is and is not “accurate” information.

C. Organic social movements vs. interest group-driven movements.
   2. “Pop culture’s re-awakening: is this political shift a movement or moment?” The Guardian, 17 February 2018. https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2018/feb/17/pop-cultures-re-awakening-is-this-political-shift-a-movement-or-moment
4. “China Caught Astroturfing Social Networks.” *The Register*, 20 May 2016. https://www.theregister.co.uk/2016/05/20/china Caught astroturfing political_posts/

D. Generational differences/difficulties.

E. Decline of “traditional” media (print newspapers, terrestrial radio, magazines)

F. Coping with assertions of bias (media, publicity, policy).
3. “Google search algorithms are not impartial. They can be biased, just like their designers.” *NBC News*, 21 February 2018.  
https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/google-search-algorithms-are-not-impartial-they-are-biased-just-ncna849886  

https://medium.com/trust-media-and-democracy/can-the-media-earn-the-publics-trust-e9de67bde2a4  

G. Consolidation of communication means/distribution of information (traditional and emerging)
1. “These 6 Corporations Control 90% Of The Media In America.” *Business Insider*, 14 June 2012.  
https://www.businessinsider.com/these-6-corporations-control-90-of-the-media-in-america-2012-6 (a bit dated but does provide context to the consolidation issue)  

http://www.medialit.org/reading-room/empire-strikes-mergers-media-world  

https://abcnews.go.com/Nightline/story?id=128452&page=1  

https://www.wpr.org/effects-media-consolidation-local-news  

H. Access to information means (net neutrality vs. equitable access; geographical differences, “digital divide”)

https://www.brookings.edu/blog/techtank/2016/07/18/rural-and-urban-america-divided-by-broadband-access/  


4. “Social Media Use Continues to Rise in Developing Countries but Plateaus Across Developed Ones.” Pew Research Center, 19 June 2018  
http://www.pewglobal.org/2018/06/19/social-media-use-continues-to-rise-in-developing-countries-but-plateaus-across-developed-ones/  

I. Culture of Proximity -- Social Experiential Marketing (top down vs. bottom up; newsjacking)
1. “3 Ways to Use Experiential Marketing to Deepen the Impact of Social Media.” *Ad Week*, 22 May 2018.  

https://www.impactbnd.com/blog/social-media-marketing-failures


J. Content distribution – adapting to changing expectations (Streaming services vs established “cord” cutting)


Web-bases Resources

- Wired Magazine. www.wired.com
- TechCrunch. https://techcrunch.com
- TechDirt. www.techdirt.com
- CNET: www.cnet.com
- Pew Research Center: www.pewresearch.org
- The Journal of Popular Culture (Michigan State University)
  http://www.journalofpopularculture.com/
- Media, Culture & Society. SAGE Journals. http://journals.sagepub.com/home/mcs#

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If coaches have any questions regarding outline content, feel free to contact us:
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