Chapter 1

Debate as a Valuable Social Process and a Unique Educational Tool

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Why Study Debate?

Societies grow, flourish, decay or disappear as the result of decisions and actions taken or not taken by their members. Leaders who persuade, community members who influence others, and individuals who introduce new ideas all contribute to the directions their societies take. Because individuals live in societies, differences among those individuals inevitably will cause disagreement among societal members. As a consequence, societies invent rules about how to settle disputes and about what arguments are deemed most effective during that process.

Some rules are formally codified with strict regulations, such as procedures used in court systems, government legislations, or legal hearings. Skilled, ethical debaters can use those venues to promote healthier societies; poor or unethical debaters can contribute to the erosion of social bonds and the fracture of societies. Because of this central role of persuasion in societies and because of the need for excellent debaters to engage these formal social procedures, the study of debate is vital to all individuals and also to the civilizations in which they live. Studying
debate by enacting simulations of justice systems and courtroom protocols constitutes the practice of educational debate, which trains participants for these essential social roles.

Contributing to society also is a reason to study debate. Debate trains students to contribute to their societies by creating cogent, formal arguments presented in public settings. While educational debate does not usually deal with informal situations, many experienced debaters learn to distinguish key features about the practice of debate, features beneficial to informal settings. Studying debate, then, benefits society both in formal, public arenas as well as in informal, personal ones.

Debating features argument, so learning to understand the nature of argument is yet another reason to study debate. As it is used in everyday talk, the word, “argument,” may prompt readers to think of raised voices and uncomfortable feelings—“I had an argument with my friend” or “My office mate and I have been arguing all day.” In these cases, when people refer to arguments, they often mean heated exchanges where speakers act at odds with one another.

In this textbook, however, a different meaning for argument is used. The study of argument is the study of one of many means people use to influence or persuade one another. If a person says, “The sun is shining and the birds are singing! This is certainly a great day,” he or she has created an argument. The claim in the argument is that the day is “certainly a great” one. The evidence presented concerns the sun and birds. A listener might agree or disagree with this person’s argument. Viewed from this perspective, argument occurs in nearly every message sent between individuals.

Social rules govern these arguments. In both formal and informal instances, social rules apply not only to the way a person acts while presenting an argument, but also to the structure of the argument itself. These social rules indicate how to assess the argument including such issues as credibility, sufficiency, or believability.

Thinking about argument in these ways rather than merely as a heated spat more clearly identifies why learning to debate ethically and skillfully is so critical to a society. Take a moment to think about how many times a day each person makes an argument like the one described above. Later in Chapter 3 a formal definition of argument will be discussed, but for the present, read “argument” not as referring to emotions or rancor but as referring to tools such as reasoning and claims used by an individual who wishes to persuade someone else.

How effectively that person has used these tools can be critiqued as to whether or not the argument has merit: “The argument was not believable because the criminal took the position that everyone has a right to steal anything they desire” or “You bring up a good argument regarding the cost of this project, one that had not occurred to me” or “The argument did not persuade me because no evidence was provided.” This way of understanding “argument” sets up the possibility for debaters to learn and then practice principles for selecting excellent tools and using them well, therefore making good arguments and appropriate techniques, improving their abilities to successfully persuade others.
Studying debate also means learning to use these principles of argument, principles designed to engage the integrity of the idea and also to persuade the listener. The study of debate prepares students to examine an argument not with the intent to recall who said what to whom or to cast blame on another’s character, but with the intent of locating the key points of dispute on both sides of any question and then devising good arguments from that information. This skill prepares students to engage the inevitable disputes that arise in a society.

At this point readers are encouraged to begin observing members of a society (including themselves) who are using arguments, especially those using arguments to manage disputes. Observers may be surprised to see how often arguments occur. Since societies usually label only rancorous events as “arguments,” the daily use of arguments among individuals is usually not recognized. Once readers begin to observe the multitude of arguments made in each exchange, they can begin to understand the scope of this textbook.

For example, arguments occur regularly in friendly, casual situations such as a discussion of whether the town mayor made the right choice regarding traffic signs or whether the Internet is a benefit or an annoyance. If, for instance, one parent asserts, “We need to consider sending our child to a private school because the local school is inferior” and the other parent responds, “I don’t think we could afford that because we already cannot pay our bills,” their exchange constitutes an argument. The parents may not raise their voices or even consider each other disputants, but from the perspective of the study of argument these parents are expressing reasons regarding one side or the other of the issue, and each speaker will or will not be persuaded by those reasons. Since the situation is an informal one, the decision likely will be made by the participants in the debate rather than by a judge, but the fundamental process of thoroughly presenting both sides of a question and then producing a decision remains the same. Observing the many circumstances in which a speaker attempts to persuade someone else will help students see how prevalent argument is in society and how essential the study of argument and debate is to all facets of social action.

Another reason to study debate is to learn to differentiate between arguing simply to win and arguing to gain understanding of a complex conflict toward influencing others to that understanding. Debating with good arguments does not mean both parties will end in agreement regarding the dispute. During the debate or after a decision has been made, disputants using good arguments may still disagree in significant measure with each other’s positions about the question or about the final decision. However, if their debate was an excellent one, it will have spelled out important issues for each side, points of agreement and disagreement between parties, and other relevant information. Clarifying problems that separate disputants allows debate to progress toward clashes within the issues rather than muddling around in issues of misunderstanding. If the two parties debate without reaching an agreement, they may engage the service of an adjudicator, a third party who will render a decision.

So even if agreement is not reached after arguments were traded between two disputants, the debate will still reap benefits. The debate may illuminate new ideas about how to move forward. These key features—the explication of each disputant’s position and the generation of new information for each side to consider—make up one of the greatest values of debate and one of the most important reasons to study debate. Those key features contained in the arguments
chosen by the disputants provide all parties with the essential information needed to form an immediate decision and also to find alternative decisions if necessary.

If disputants are presenting their arguments for a judge, their dissatisfaction with their inability to persuade the judge to their sides may generate frustration, but the value remains for finding the multiple facets of the dispute and beginning the process of decision-making toward managing the dispute. As disputants improve their debating skills, they become more able to find arguments to ethically accomplish persuasion.

The study of argument does not mean ensuring agreement during disputes nor does it mean an excellent debater enters the dispute to “beat an opponent.” Authors of this textbook believe that rather than debating for the purpose of besting an opponent, excellent students learn to debate well for the purpose of comprehensively representing one side of an argument toward the goal of generating and arguing for excellent ways to manage difficult disputes. This textbook promotes the position that individuals pursue the study of argument to become more effective citizens; to forward a collective good; to learn to persuade ethically; and to learn useful, effective ways to enhance the decision-making process during a dispute.

Since educational debate uses an adjudicator and deals primarily with the more formal argument settings, studying debate usually means studying arguments used for large, social problems such as water rights, environmental abuse, government policies and the like. Deciding whether to construct a new school or increase taxes or change a policy dealing with waste products all require scrutiny of the problem for good arguments on both sides of the question. Students studying debate learn how best to structure arguments for and against various issues and also learn how best to present those arguments.

An excellent debate—that is, one that outlines the vital issues on both sides and presents good reasons for each position—constitutes the most productive way people can make decisions about difficult questions. An excellent debate improves possibilities for making the best decisions. Studying debate means preparing to engage the various disputes that arise in a society not with the goal of defeating the other side, but with the goal of enhancing the society by discovering and arguing for the best decision for the best reasons.

In all cases of dispute, individuals who argue well are more likely to succeed in achieving their goals and persuading others to adopt their perspectives. Lawyers, mayors, school board officials, parents, farmers, physicians, employees, employers, artists, children, presidents—all individuals need to be able to think critically, use principles of argument, listen carefully, respond ethically and appropriately, and speak effectively because all individuals use arguments in decision making. In other words, all individuals in a society benefit themselves, their communities, and their societies by knowing how to debate well. The reasons for studying debate and the value of developing debating skills, then, derive from the social need—at the individual level, the community level, and the societal level—to effectively manage individual and group disputes within a society.
An Historical Look at Argumentation and Debate in China and the United States

In all societies individuals create arguments in some fashion and answer or attempt to answer arguments made in return. The nature of those arguments constitutes the fundamental basis of debate. The nature of argument and the function of debate vary from culture to culture but usually include standards of some kind that must be met to achieve persuasion. Although the world is quickly moving to points of view based on a global perspective rather than only on the national perspectives that have so long been in place, local or cultural standards continue to exist and exert powerful influences on individuals. Cultures develop standards for how to determine credibility, how to create a logical explanation, what constitutes a dynamic example, and so on. A look at a society’s history of key decisions made through time can reveal what that society has deemed important, for example, what a society identifies as effective arguments. Such a chronological perspective could help present-day arguers understand how their own society has viewed arguments, decision-making, and dispute management.

Before students begin to learn terms, definitions, and explanations about the debate process, they can benefit from examining a brief outline of the different ways societies in China and in the United States historically have dealt with argument, decision-making, and dispute management—specifically in this case, argument and debate. Such an outline of two great societies will provide students with two models and therefore a wider perspective since most people often operate using only the single model with which they are most familiar. Since the outlines are very brief, students will be exposed to only a brief glimpse of historical context; however, students may use works in the cited bibliographies to extend their understandings. Even reading these brief outlines, however, students may begin the practice of searching for arguments contained within those histories. Students can locate good reasons for the commonalities that occur between the two societies as well as good reasons on both sides for differences that appear. The histories also will provide students with opportunities to find similarities and differences both in the conceptualization of the ideas of dispute and argument and in the social rules enacted to respond to those disputes and theories of argument, that is, the ways the societies use debate. Using these histories as points of reference, then, students can more astutely engage their own studies of debate and better understand the contexts of their present-day debate experiences.

Argumentation and Debate in China

In Rhetoric in Ancient China, Fifth to Third Century B.C.E., Xing Lu argues that understanding the part played by argument and debate historically embedded in Chinese society can best be achieved by taking a “holistic and contextualized” approach (p. 35). Xing explains that Chinese scholars do not separate or systematize these important qualities of human interactions as do some western scholars because the qualities exist as a larger “constellation” (p. 35) that includes features such as art, philosophical stances, religion, ethical positions, political stratagems, and human relationships. Xing writes that the high value and importance of argument and debate—concepts subsumed within the realm of rhetoric—are evident throughout China’s history.
Argumentation in China. Men of letters representing Confucianism, Taoism, and the rest of “the Hundred Schools of Thought” in the Spring and Autumn Period and during the Warring States Period debated and competed with each other. In these debates clear, some itinerant scholars advocated original, and substantiated expressions. In East Han dynasty, Wang Chong called for clarity and a direct or deductive reasoning method that promoted drawing inferences and conclusions from verified evidence.

Wang also attacked the then current style of slavishly imitating the ancients (Wu, Yun. Pp. 185 – 186). Chen Kui from South Song dynasty in Rules of Writing, which is considered the earliest rhetorical work in China, identified the general overriding principle that language should be simple, clear, succinct and contemporary. Thus, content should be primary and form should be subordinate to content (Kirkpatrick and Zhichang).

Later scholars such as Gui Youguang in the Ming Dynasty echoed their advocacy by proposing thesis layouts similar to those in the Western style ( Sun Zhimei). In modern China, Hu Shi pioneered the Vernacular Chinese movement with eight principles in striking similarity to Chen Kui’s advocacy, which was probably also shaped by the education he received at Cornell and Columbia Universities in the United States (Zhang Fan and Cai Xiaohui).

These few examples of Chinese scholars and practitioners discussing argument—its functions, uses, and forms, etc.—demonstrate the rich heritage of the role of argument in China. How arguments have been used in government proceedings and in social movements across China can be traced by examining the uses of debate over the centuries.

Debate in China. In addition to the study of argument, debate also has played important roles in the history of China, none more prolific than during a Golden Age of Chinese philosophy. This prolific era for debate included the turbulent Spring and Autumn Period (770-476BC) and the Warring States Period (475-221BC) when itinerant persuaders advised state kings on issues of war strategies and diplomacy. In this era, known as the Contention of a Hundred Schools of Thought, free discussions of thoughts and philosophies flourished. Scholars representing Confucianism, Taoism, Legalism, Monism and many other schools of thought debated with each other and competed for supremacy, until Confucianism became a dominant state philosophy and cultural ideology at the time of Emperor Han Wu (156-86 B.C.E) (Wiebke Denecke p. 38).
Further examples will be presented from the history of China where disputing arguments about a social issue emerged on a public stage characterizing a sharp clash of ideas, a clash experienced at some time in every society. Before moving to those examples, however, readers should distinguish between two different usages of the word, “debate.”

A debate among scholars or intellectuals competing for supremacy indicates a formal, ongoing engagement of two or more individuals who will offer arguments and counterarguments to each other regarding a specific topic, often over a longer period of time at several different intervals. Their topic may pertain to their particular fields of study or perhaps even to a single point of contention that arose in a previous debate.

However, their topic also may be one echoing a general concern in a society—for example, a society’s debate about morality in a given situation. This debatable issue also may be referred to as “a debate” in the society, but in this case “debate” means the actual issue in question. Members of society may discuss this issue at any time with any listener—at home or at work or with friends, taking sides and voicing arguments. For example, a society might be said to debate the one-child policy; on the other hand, university scholars or government officials might hold a debate regarding the one-child policy. In the first instance, informal disputes will occur in myriad forms and at various times among societal members over a time when the topic generates high interest. In the second instance, the reference to debate indicates a formalized event, usually occurring at a specific time between two or more appointed individuals who follow predictable rules. In this historical review, readers can learn to use context as a guide to the meaning of “debate” as intended by the speaker or writer.

In this textbook, the more formalized debate—in fact, the form used for educational debate—will be the most common use of the word. Educational debate uses a formal model of regulated and designed interactions between debating teams for effectively dealing with “society’s great debates.” In the following examples, however, the “social debate” understanding of the word is more often used. In either usage of “debate,” key ingredients of argument, dispute and decision-making about means for managing the dispute are present.
Great societal debates occurred during the New Cultural Movement period in China at the beginning of the 20th century. Eminent scholars such as Chen Duxiu, Cai Yuanpei, Li Dazhao, Lu Xun, Zhou Zuoren, and Hu Shi called for the abandonment of the use of Confucian texts and ancient classics, exhorting these texts should be replaced with modern textual and critical methods. Spearheaded by Hu Shi, the New Culture Movement scholars also initiated the Vernacular Chinese Movement to replace classical Chinese in writing. These intellectuals actively debated issues of science, technology, individualism, philosophy and democracy. These debates brought changes to Chinese cultural values and practices. For example, Chen Duxiu claimed that only science and democracy could save China from its politics, morality, academics and ideology (Li Cunshan p. 3). The New Culture movement also led to both rebellion against the traditional marriage dictated by respective parents rather than couple choosing partners themselves and support of emancipation for women from the bondage of illiteracy and from having no choice but to perform all home chores (Guan, Wei).

Another milestone era in the history of China during which debate played an important role in influencing the nation’s direction began with the third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party in 1978. The third Plenary Session repudiated the Cultural Revolution, ended mass class struggle, marked the beginning of the "Reform and Opening Up" policy, and channeled social resources into economic development. Those in the session called upon the nation “to emancipate minds, seek truths from facts and unite as one in looking into the future” (Song, Yangyan pp. 21-22).

An article, “Practice Is the Sole Criterion for Truth Examination,” was published in the Guangming Daily in May 1978 and triggered a nationwide discussion and debate about the appropriate criteria to be used for testing truth. Although contested, the majority of CPC party members and the masses reacted to the arguments presented in this article by supporting the viewpoint expressed in its title. This large, societal debate thus helped shatter the bond between the prevalent cult of personality and the ideological guidelines of these “two whatevers” (Ye, Yonglie p. 157): “We will resolutely uphold whatever policy decisions Chairman Mao made, and unswervingly follow whatever instructions Chairman Mao gave” (Zhang, Jincai p. 4).

Currently in China, societal-based debate flourishes on television and in newspapers as well in various social media such as Weibo, Renren, Wechat, Liba, Tianya, etc. One of the clearest examples of media inciting societal debate involves the 2006 case of Peng Yu who discovered a 65-year-old woman who had fallen in the street. Peng Yu took the woman to the hospital and then paid her medical bill. Following this incident, Peng Yu was successfully sued for $7,000 in medical expenses. Since Peng Yu had paid the woman’s medical bill, the judge suspected him of having caused the woman’s fall.

The Peng Yu Case was one of the most famous judicial verdicts in recent Chinese history (Song, Yangyan pp. 21-22). China’s newspapers and websites hosted nationwide discussions and debates on the justice or injustice done to Peng Yu. The public expressed outrage about the verdict of “guilty” based on “common sense” and the judge’s rationale for the verdict. Tweets and posts on social media and discussions on other media in China went beyond the question of whether Peng Yu was a martyred Good Samaritan or not, and led to a national reflection on the judicial role in promoting or degrading social morality.
Other current topics also occupy spaces within public debate in Chinese society. The College Entrance Examination, known as *Gaokao*¹, generates active, ongoing public discussion and presently is being reformed. The abolition or adjustment of the one-child policy also has become a controversy because of the aging population in China. The Internet provides yet another social debate: Does the civic engagement offered by Internet development for voices in all circles outweigh the rancor and brawling displayed by netizens—citizens active in online communication—in social media sites?

These topics and others circulate among the populace and provide important opportunities for skilled debaters to practice dispute management by contributing sound arguments on both sides of the questions before weighing a decision. Toward creating arenas for students to gain these skills, China has developed programs of educational debate where students come together with other students in other colleges and universities to develop more sophisticated understandings of argument and the art of debate, learn from experience, and practice skills that can enhance their own lives and also improve ways to manage disputes in their society. A discussion of educational debate will follow after a brief review of social argument and debate in the United States.

*Argumentation and Debate in the United States*

In the United States, rhetoric—and more specifically argument—is studied as the basic tool used in debate. Rhetoric and philosophy often are closely intertwined. For this discussion “rhetoric” is broadly defined as all symbolic methods of persuasion. While persuasion often is conceived of an overt attempt to influence or move the listener, rhetoric encompasses those less overt messages as well. For example, “Please change your vote to support our candidate because she is honest” is easily recognizable as a persuasive statement that gives the listener a reason to vote for this candidate. However, “The weather is colder here than usual” carries a less visible, but also persuasive appeal; the speaker has established a claim with which others may or may not agree. These two statements provide only two examples of persuasion.

“Argumentation” in western scholarship is a particular kind of rhetoric that involves the use of reason as the primary means of persuasion. Thus, when a person’s persuasion involves the use of reasoned communication, that person is said to be presenting arguments. The study of argument and the attending concepts is called “argumentation.” Western theories about arguments—their functions, their structures, and their uses—have evolved from the inception of rhetoric in Greece more than two thousand years ago until today. A short history of the development of rhetoric, argument, and debate demonstrates the high value placed on these concepts by United States society.

*Argumentation in the United States*. Western rhetoric developed from the need for individuals in the ancient Greco-Roman culture to present their legal complaints to a judge or jury in a court of law. Many scholars identify Corax and Tisias (both 5th century B.C.) as the inventors of rhetoric. Corax developed methods of persuasion to be used in courts of law and taught students his theories that undergirded the later development of probability. Corax used only speaking and

¹ *Gaokao* is pinyin for *College Entrance Examination* in China.
teaching to dispense his ideas, but his students, and in particular Tisias, produced written notes which were sold in Sicily and eventually circulated back to Greece. Ultimately, a handbook about argument and public speaking evolved. Both Plato (427-347 B.C.) and Socrates (469-399 B.C.), whose works were far more widely influential, later referred to Tisias’s theories of argument (Kennedy).

Although rhetoric—including argumentation—was not his primary topic, Aristotle (384-320 B.C.) contributed significantly to the history of rhetoric by formulating categories, advocating a philosophical viewpoint citing the importance of arguing both sides of a question, and discussing the relationship between rhetoric and dialectic. Unlike his teacher, Plato, Aristotle did not conceptualize dialectic as an inquiry toward truth (Kennedy). He saw rhetoric as an art, an offshoot of dialectic and he defined rhetoric as “the faculty of discovering in the particular case all the available means of persuasion” (Cooper). Aristotle indicated that some forms of proof were “non-artistic,” such as contracts or written documents. “Artistic” proofs, however, did rely on the artistry of the orator, relying on “a man who can reason logically, can analyze the types of human character (ethe), along with the virtues, and, thirdly, can analyze the emotions. . . .” (Cooper).

After the second century B.C., philosophers recoiled from the growing popularity of the study of rhetoric and refused to teach it. Cicero (106-43 B.C.) attempted to ease the tension by promoting the use of a combination of rhetoric and philosophy to develop students into intellectually astute and talented orators whose rhetoric advocated for civic service. Nearly one hundred years later, M. Fabius Quintilianus (35-95 A.D.) echoed Cicero’s idea, calling for “the good man speaking well.” (In those times, only men could speak in a public forum.) Quintilian also forwarded a strong advocacy for using rhetoric as a principle method for the general education of the populace (Thonssen and Baird). A brief summary of the Greco-Roman tradition can be found in Contemporary Perspectives on Rhetoric (Foss, Foss, and Trapp pp. 4 - 8).

During the Middle Ages of the western tradition, rhetoric continued to be taught, variously using models of excellent speakers for students to imitate as well as by having students memorize or mimic words and writings of famous people. Near the end of the Renaissance, however, the development of rhetoric continued to grow into new areas of focus. For example, Francis Bacon (1565-1621), a skilled and authoritative speaker, spoke artfully in the English House of Commons on weighty government matters. Bacon’s writings emphasized the importance of audience and the need to verify the senses with empirical data.

Scotsmen George Campbell (1719-1796) and Hugh Blair (1718-1800) and Englishman Richard Whately (1758-1859), all religious ministers, wrote respectively about evidence, audience analysis, and the relationship between taste and reason, collectively setting the stage for the most recent developments in rhetoric and argument in the West generally and in the United States in particular (Foss, Foss, and Trapp).

Some of the most important Western works of the twentieth century regarding argument include Stephen Toulmin’s Uses of Argument and Chaîm Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca’s The New Rhetoric. These scholars have been especially influential with teachers of argument and debate in Canada and the United States. An English philosopher who became interested in the
study of how arguments are constructed, Toulmin is most well known for his “layout of argument” which involves a diagram showing how various parts of a reasoned argument combine with one another. The Toulmin Model has become a standard to follow in different forms of debate and is used in this textbook as well as many others that feature argument, debate, or persuasion. Interestingly, Toulmin does not use the word, “rhetoric,” and considers his book to be concerned with the philosophy of science.

The work of Chaïm Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca was especially important to the development of the Western point of view towards rhetoric in the mid-twentieth century. Their contributions fall into three categories: the concept of audience, the starting points of argument, and the techniques of argument. The theories advanced by these three contemporary scholars, along with work amassed by classic western scholars throughout the centuries, provide the rhetorical platform used in this textbook for learning about debate.

Debate in the United States. Debate has been important in the United States since the nation was founded in the late eighteenth century. The original governing body of the United States met in Philadelphia in the state of Pennsylvania where that group of men debated among themselves, voicing various ideas about how the government of this new nation should be structured. Through argument and compromise, the group developed a document that became the Constitution of the United States.

Since that time, debates of various kinds have been common in the United States, especially in three arenas: legal, legislative, and political. In the legal arena, rules of argument and procedure are strict and lawyers must abide by the standards of the court as they present their arguments and counter arguments to judges and juries. In the legislative and political arenas, far fewer rules are codified, thus changes evolve through time and venue.

The first arena, the United States legal system, provides one of the most common venues for formal debate. Criminal trials (where a person or persons are accused of illegal activities) and civil trials (where a person or persons seek damages or remedy from another person or persons) consist of a series of arguments made by lawyers representing clients (although sometimes the clients serve as their own lawyers). Decisions—called verdicts—are made in some cases by a jury of peers and in some cases by a judge alone. The legal system is comprised of a series of levels of courts; sometimes litigants who lose in a lower court appeal the decision to a higher court. In the legal system, the verdict announced by the judge or jury serves as the final decision regarding the case.

The second arena, legislative debates, differs from legal debates in the United States. In the legislature, debaters are the elected officials within the local, state, and national jurisdictions. Guidelines for what a government official may or may not say in these debates are not as strict as are the rules for lawyers within a courtroom. In addition, elected officials at various levels throughout the government may retain researchers on staff to gather information or discover evidence. The debates supported by this research can extend for days or weeks during which multiple speakers will present opinions, information, arguments, historical reviews, and so on, one at a time. Legislative debates engage important decisions such as economic policies, social policies, environmental choices, or declarations of war.
In the third arena, political debates occur in various settings and various formats in the United States. Debates at a local level can occur between candidates for city mayor or candidates for the local school board, for example. Often communities facing controversial issues involving civic problems such as school zoning or taxes or building a new community center will schedule a public debate with speakers representing different sides of the questions to an audience of community members who sometimes also engage in the debate.

Political debates in the United States also occur at the national level. The Great Debates of 1858 between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas, both candidates for Senator from the state of Illinois, became famous historical events consisting of seven debates dealing with the controversial topic of slavery. Candidates for President also debate one another. In 1960, John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon participated in the first, nationally televised presidential debate. Since that time, presidential debates have occurred near Election Day featuring all the viable candidates running for office. In these debates, formats vary, but often moderators ask a question to which each candidate responds, promoting their own perspective and refuting the other candidate. Sometimes the candidates speak directly to each other, making arguments or counter arguments. The television audience reaction to the debates can affect the outcome of the election.

While debates in the United States often reveal crucial differences in candidates’ positions and preferences, not all legal, legislative, or political debates produce positive, useful results. Candidates unused to debating can falter or misstep; information can be presented that later will be determined to be false evidence; candidates can deviate from the central topic and engage in character attacks. In some cases where the debates are televised, the camera is kinder to some candidates than others, generating problems for the candidate with a poor visual presence. In short, some of these debates depart sharply from the kind of ethical, social debate promoted in this textbook.

While debate in the United States remains a vital form for examining and managing disputes, the key features in every debate are the debater’s intent and choices with regard to the topic and purposes for debating. In the fifty years since the first Presidential debates aired, audiences in the United States have become more attuned to the purposes of these important debates and more critical of poor or unethical performances. Many audience members now expect candidates to be prepared, ethical, skilled, intelligent and thoughtful.

**Contemporary Developments in Argumentation, Debate, and Persuasion**

As the various cultures of the world have become more accessible to one another through the Internet, increased opportunities for global travel, and more complex international relationships among economies and governments, the need for intercultural understanding and exchange has amplified. Negotiations among individuals and groups of various philosophical or cultural positions can stall when inherent values compete. The study and practice of debate has spread throughout the world as a viable means for investigating, airing, comparing, contrasting, and engaging differences, differences that otherwise might lead to violence. Debate has shown itself to be a reasoned, thoughtful, and intelligent means for working through contentious issues by
thoroughly examining the complex facets of those issues and, in some cases, calling in third party adjudicators to render decisions.

Much of the world debate community still draws from a fundamentally Greco-Roman core of debate features that calls for claims, arguments, reasoning, and evidence. Authors of this text, while working to include various cultural traditions, largely rely on the Western body of study called “argumentation” to explain issues such as reasoning fallacies, case construction, and audience analysis, for example. The authors recognize these predominant themes emerge from the Greco-Roman core and continue to work toward inclusive ways to infuse global debate with multicultural means of making meaning, persuading, promoting understanding among debaters, and finding good ways to reconcile difficult global issues.

In addition, the authors recognize that differences other than national culture also can privilege or disadvantage certain groups of readers. In the research section of this textbook, for example, attention is given to research done on the Internet where debaters engage such useful sources as Lexus-Nexus or Google Scholar. Such suggestions, obviously, ignore the real circumstance that the large majority of people in the world do not have access to such luxuries. Underlying assumptions in these discussions in this textbook, then, presume that the case for one group is the case for all groups. Because of these varying perspectives and value systems, providing educational information in a way that does not privilege one group over another or one philosophy over another can, at times, present antithetical challenges. Regardless of these challenges, authors of this text and other scholars continue to seek inclusive ways to accomplish the goal of human beings making excellent global decisions in nonviolent ways. The authors acknowledge that providing instruction to all cultures, all socio-economic classes, and all political credos demands ongoing, dynamic reconstruction of curriculum toward inclusion of all voices. Revised editions of this textbook will continually address this changing status.

Balancing these problems of difference, reflected in privilege, bias, traditional values, philosophical difference, and the like, is the challenge for the future. Ironically, debate stands out as a valuable tool for just such a task. Debate can contribute to the goal of moving away from ethnocentrism toward a global perspective that recognizes and values difference while also recognizing that differences will continue to exist in dynamic ways because excellent debate is the product of talented, intelligent, inventive people seeking that end. Debate provides a productive means for those dynamic cultural and philosophical differences—that is, differences that will arise continually and in various forms—to be heard, discussed, and managed while also preserving the integrity of the debaters and cultures involved. Although every participant will not agree with every decision, debate provides the ongoing opportunity for disputants to return to the arena again and again with different arguments and new evidence. Such a process supports evolutionary changes in ways that nonviolently will address the expressed, global issues.

Toward that end of evolutionary change, a view of contemporary rhetorical developments from the prospective of Chinese rhetoric is critical to students using this textbook so those students may better understand how to read and interpret the information presented. Since any culture’s rhetoric, with the aim of being persuasive, is never developed in a vacuum, it has been heavily influenced by that culture’s political mechanisms, philosophical traditions and cultural contexts. Just as seminal works in the Greco-Roman tradition have shaped rhetoric in the West, seminal
works in China have been influential on rhetoric in China. Since this textbook approaches argumentation and debate from a Greco-Roman core, students who use this textbook benefit from following Chinese perspective on that approach.

Because Confucianism and Taoism are mainstream philosophies loyal to hierarchies and traditions in China’s long history, rhetoric in China, which often shares the fabric of Chinese philosophies, developed on a disparate track from Western rhetoric. Some comparative studies have been conducted on Chinese oratory, (Oliver) but more often than not, because of the “dichotomies of antonymic concepts such as originality versus conventionality, rationality versus assertive discourse, cogency versus repetitive indirection,” Chinese rhetoric has been “consistently associated with the negative terms” (Liu Yameng pp 318 – 335). More recent scholarship suggests using less ethnocentric assessment tools for analysis results in more generative, forward-thinking, and useful understandings of these dichotomies of thought.

Recent years have witnessed abundant comparative studies claiming more commonalities than discrepancies between Chinese and Western rhetoric. These comparative studies manifest commonalities between Chinese and Western persuasive techniques, commonalities remarkably produced in the contexts of radically different languages. One author uses these studies to argue that rhetoric may represent an inherent commonality among human beings: “It would appear that universal rhetorical elements exist and that these elements connect humans of different cultures, building a bridge across the communication gaps between them” (Lu, Xing p. 30). Toward that same conclusion, philosopher Richard J. Bernstein writes that “[incommensurable] languages and traditions are not to be thought of as self-contained windowless monads that share nothing in common. . . . There are always points of overlap and crisscrossing even if there is not perfect commensuration” (pp. 85 – 103). These scholars suggest these points of shared experiences among and between cultures derive from human commonalities, thus providing starting points for developing mutually acceptable means for nonviolent decision-making processes.

However, while appreciating the commonalities among these rhetorical features, the authors acknowledge the lack of propriety and fairness in a process of canonizing one rhetorical culture, imposing its framework to analyze another, namely using the Greco-Roman system to parse Chinese discourses. Students reading this textbook—students both from China and from the United States—can remember that the tools designed from and used for analysis of Western persuasive strategies can assess Chinese passages only as those passages do or do not comply with the philosophies inherent in the design of the tools. An important argument can be made that such an application of Greco-Roman argumentation may not necessarily be applicable to Chinese passages. To more clearly illuminate the problem of assessing one culture’s production with the tools of another culture, ask this question: What if Chinese persuasive strategies were used to assess Western ones? A similar disconnect might occur. The very presentation of different rhetorical styles inherently calls up the different bases of cultural values used to shape those styles. Recognition and understanding of those basic differences provide a beginning from which a debater may grow and develop the art of global debate toward discovering ways for human beings to move forward through intelligent, thoughtful, and ethical interchange among cultures.
Regarding the differences between Chinese and Greco-Roman rhetoric, metaphor, analogies, and appeals to authoritative testimonies are far more prevalent in Chinese persuasive discourse than are deductive and inductive methods of reasoning used in Western argumentation; to establish the latter as the orthodox system is to eclipse the unique and intrinsic nature of the former. Just as scholarship has emerged from Greco-Roman scholars studying their own rhetorical practices, so have research projects studied the virtues of Chinese rhetoric in its own terms and structures. For instance, Qu uses *Qi* to describe the inexplicable intricacies in Chinese discourse, intricacies that constitute a key concept that “dominates and orchestrates the rhetorical practice” (pp. 61 – 71). In another example, Mao explored the “*yin-yang*” concept that was “rhetorically important in ancient China” (216 – 237).

One key with regard to multicultural diversities and commonalities in persuasive discourses, then, is to create an amalgam of systems where, for example, the culturally specific virtues of multiple cultures, such as the virtues of Chinese persuasive discourses, are honored. Both Chinese students and Western students can gain value by learning about Western argumentation and Chinese rhetorical culture. If a student from either culture wishes to communicate effectively across cultural borders, then each culture has much to learn from the other. Bonds between nations already have tightened cultures and societies into one global community where treaties govern currency exchange and international business, environment protection, the Worldwide Web, etc. Effective, ethical debate provides a means to use persuasive dialogues to seek out conflict resolution measures rather than resorting to violence as peoples work toward agreements regarding various, critical, global decisions to be made. These dialogues can facilitate cross-cultural and transnational communication within the present, unprecedented, globally integrated situation promoting a better understanding of and respect for each other’s rhetorical cultures.

This understanding is especially important for the younger generation in China and the United States. If China’s voice is to be heard and to be better understood by the Western world and if the voice of the Western world is to be better understood by China, Chinese practices and Western practices by the younger generations need to engage ethical and effective argumentation strategies, negotiating a global system that better incorporates multiple voices. Through debate studies, young people in China may become familiar with Greco-Roman argument protocols currently widely adopted in international arenas. Such actions would comply with the words of Chinese Rhetorician Liu Yameng, who sought “to justify my positions in your terms” (pp. 297 – 315). Through debates with Chinese students, young people in the United States can become familiar with Chinese rhetoric. In these ways, cultures using argument techniques presently adopted in international arenas bring new voices with new ideas and new perspectives. That multiplicity of knowing might help surmount obstacles resulting from cultural differences but also may operate as models for others seeking better communication and more effective decision-making between people of different cultures.

**Developments in Educational Debate**

The term, “educational debate,” refers to the process of teaching students to debate. At present, the teaching of educational debates takes approximately the same form worldwide: students learn from instruction on college campuses and also participate in intercollegiate debate tournaments
usually held on some weekends at different colleges. The instruction presents information and trains students in debating and argumentation skills. The debate tournaments provide opportunities for students to practice those skills.

Both the instruction and the tournaments use models built upon the Greco-Roman system. Both the instruction and the formats have undergone significant modification in the last century, spawning multiple formats to represent the varied ways people feel most able to present their positions in fair and productive arenas. British Parliamentary Debate, Canadian Parliamentary Debate, Worlds-Style Debate, Australasian Debate, Cross-Examination Debate, Public Forum Debate, and Lincoln-Douglas Debate are a few examples that demonstrate not only different arrangements of teams and speakers but also of differences in whether or not a speaker can be directly questioned by another speaker, whether a speaker presents more than one speech in the debate, and whether the debate is heard by a single or multiple adjudicators.

In addition, variations among debaters and debate styles have grown. Some debate tournaments feature styles where speakers provide a tightly condensed stream of evidence, speaking in a rapid fashion for the duration of their allotted time. Some feature styles where a speaker’s character, wit, and emotional presentation play a more prominent role. Some debates call for two individuals to face each other, some for two teams, and some for four teams. Some of the more narrative-based cultures, for example, have widened the scope of presentational styles to emphasize description, metaphor, or analogy. In short, the conceptualization of what originally was the Greco-Roman debate style has been evolving during the last century as other styles of oral presentation have entered the global conversation.

Debate tournaments in educational debate might be thought of as laboratories: places where students can experiment with their speaking styles, their argument choices, their reasoning designs, and their ethical codes. Tournaments generally include several teams from several universities who debate in a one-, two- or three-day event. Since a student might attend as many as five, six, or more tournaments a year, he or she will have ample time between tournaments to review their performances; research and plan for future debates; learn new skills; and talk with other debaters, instructors, coaches, and adjudicators about their experiences. With each tournament, then, a student can try out new ways to implement their own debate strategies. Over the duration of their college experience, debate students improve their abilities to adhere to ethical means of speaking with others, research and discuss important global topics, speak intelligently and persuasively to an audience, think quickly and effectively in question-answer sessions, design creative ways to address difficult problems, address multi-faceted problems from numerous different starting points, and respond productively to criticism.

Although the histories of educational debate in the United States and in China differ, the present-day intercollegiate practices provide training for students from both countries to prepare them to participate in international debates all over the world. The recent proliferation of international tournaments for college-aged debaters provides students with significant opportunities to learn about global issues from individuals who, like themselves, have experienced some of the issues first hand. Educational debate in both the United States and China prepare students for “real life” argument situations, whether they be career situations such as lawyers or barristers, community situations such as serving on the city council, or individual situations such as helping the family
to decide whether they should move to a new locale. The histories of educational debate in each
country demonstrate their respective roads to a shared educational practice.

*Educational Debate in the United States*

Debate became popular in the United States and other Western societies in the first decade of the
19th century. In the United Kingdom, for instance, debate was sponsored at St. Andrews
(Scotland), Cambridge University, Oxford University, Cambridge University, and the London
School of Economics. Intercollegiate debating became a popular activity in United States in the
middle of the 20th century and was supported by colleges and universities including Harvard
University, Yale University, the University of Wisconsin, Willamette University, and others.
These debate societies had a hand in the formation of the National Association of Academic
Teachers of Public Speaking (now called the National Communication Association). The goal of
these colleges and universities was to promote debate as a method of teaching public speaking
(Wallace p. 496).

Today, debate is quite popular in Western, as well as Eastern colleges and universities,
particularly in the association called the “Worlds Universities Debating Council.” The first
WUDC tournament was held at Fordham University in New York City and subsequently has
rotated through various nations including Ireland, Australia, Scotland, Canada, the United States,
South Africa, Greece, Botswana, Germany and India.

In the United States, competitive debate is sponsored by at least four organizations: the
American Forensic Association, the Cross Examination Debate Association, the National
Parliamentary Debate Association, the American Parliamentary Debate Association, and the U.
S. Universities Debate Association. Each of these associations sponsors intercollegiate debate
tournaments as well as hosts a national championship for its association.

*Educational Debate in China*

As debate spread in the United States in the 19th and 20th centuries, it also spread in Asia,
including China, starting in the late 20th Century. In Asia, debate was initially promoted as a
means to teach spoken English. Debate organizers believed that by requiring students to debate
in a non-native language, students could learn to speak and write English more fluently.

In 1993, Fudan University in Shanghai won the championship of the first International Varsity
Debate (I.V.D.) held in Singapore with a triple purpose of promoting Chinese language;

enhancing the communication and friendship among contestant countries, regions, and
universities; and boosting the cooperation among international counterparts (Wang and Wu). For
the next twenty years, I.V.D was hosted by Singapore and China every two years alternatively.
Championship debaters drew rapid and significant attention. The impact of the first I.V.D kicked
off a nationwide debate wave in China. However, with too much emphasis on polished language
and a flashy speaking style, along with a lack of engagement in arguments and rigor in logic,
I.V.D quickly lost its glamour (Wang, Zhi’an p. 95.) Thereafter, I.V.D. has been modifying its
format constantly to improve the quality of arguments and sharpen the focus of the debate on the engagement of an idea. These changes strengthened debate cultures on campuses in China.

In recent years, intercollegiate English debating competitions have swept across China. Increasingly, on-campus English debating clubs have been established in significantly more colleges where regular debating activities are staged. National tournaments like The China Open and the Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press (FLTRP) Cup have involved hundreds of teams. In the past several years, Worlds-Style Debate has been practiced nationwide. The number of Chinese debaters participating in international tournaments has increased as has their successes: among others, the championship in English as Foreign Language (EFL) at the World Universities Debating Championship (WUDC) by Tsinghua University in 2007, and Championship in EFL in Asian British Parliamentary Debate by Sichuan University in 2013.

Debate is now promoted in China for more reasons than simply to improve students’ effective use of English. Debate also is promoted as a method to improve students’ critical thinking skills. Scholarly evidence confirms that participation in debate enhances students’ critical-thinking abilities (Allen, Berkowitz, Hunt, and Louden). Debaters improve those skills as they learn to use evidence and reasoning to come to critical decisions.

Debate also is important because every society wants its people to contribute as good citizens. By being informed about ideas and by learning how to contrast ideas, students learn how to make their ideas better. Debate functions on a principle of careful, thoughtful analysis rather than on a principle of ideological criticism. Effective debaters serve as prepared citizens, able not only to contribute to civil conversation substantive and useful ways to examine multifaceted problems, but also able to suggest solutions to those problems, thereby providing alternatives for improving ways their society might work.

**Moving Past Educational Debate to Generative Debate**

The format of competitive, educational debate helps teachers, coaches, and judges teach students to debate. The format, however, embodies at least two qualities that have the potential to sidetrack debaters to become “winners” and “losers” rather than ethical, global citizens exerting their best skills and efforts toward contributing thoughtful insights or even solutions to critical, worldwide problems. The competitive nature of the activity encourages students to 1) choose a position and stick to it and 2) debate only to win the decision of the adjudicator. A generative debate model does not restrict a debater in those ways. Of pedagogical necessity, however, educational debate trains students in competitive debate rather than generative debate. Nevertheless, excellent debaters can use competitive, educational debate to develop the skills and later use a generative debate model to accomplish the more difficult and complex “real life” decisions without adjudicators.

The first quality in competitive, educational debate that can sidetrack teams from generative results is that teams are expected to state a position and fundamentally remain in that position throughout the debate; little leeway is given for adjustment in response to the influx of evidence or information. For teaching purposes, that singularity of purpose is important. Teachers, judges,
and coaches can assist students in constructing clear and well-organized designs for arguments because the end goal of the persuasion does not change. As a learning tool, this practice is critical—students often have trouble learning to “stay on track,” focused on their tasks of selecting appropriate and artful argumentation tools for a particular position.

Nevertheless, generative debaters—select, advanced debaters who have vast tournament experience in argument—use the discipline of fitting argumentation skills to persuasive goals but also learn the importance of using all evidence and information to inform their positions, even evidence and information provided by debaters representing the other side of the question. While competitive debaters sometimes select a starting position that most fully positions them to “win” the debate, generative debaters select a starting position the most reflects the substance of the arguments inherent in the persuasion in favor of or opposing the question. Generative debaters adjust their positions to fit all relevant and vital evidence presented in the debate. Generative debaters advocate for the best solution or best answer in the face of all information presented, even introducing new choices if appropriate, rather than limiting their thinking to one perspective throughout the debate.

The second quality in competitive, educational debate that can turn students’ perspectives into “win/lose” dichotomies consists of the use of adjudicators. For educational purposes, the use of adjudicators helps students experience a simulation of legal or governmental environments, environments students may enter when they choose careers. For example, judges make decisions in large and small court cases, often after hearing arguments on both sides of a case. Using judges in collegiate debate tournaments helps students learn the process of arguing in front of a third party who will make a decision if the disputants cannot come to a decision with one another.

Adjudicators also are important to educational debate because they provide feedback to students’ performances. Judges write ballots for each debate or even converse with debaters after the round has ended. Students learn why the adjudicator came to a particular decision or how students might have more effectively presented their positions. While students may agree or disagree with advice given by adjudicators, the experience of talking to an adjudicator and a decision provides students with invaluable information about how different people make decisions. In these ways, students learn from the adjudicators how these particular issues were decided in this case.

Since adjudicators decide who wins the debate and since those who win the most debates earn the tournament trophy, the negative side of using adjudicators in collegiate debate appears when students lose sight of the critical nature of the topic, turning the primary focus of their efforts to winning. Generative debaters often have “gone through the stages” of debating just to win, but as they matured, redirected their efforts toward the topics themselves. Faced with grave global challenges such as water availability, food shortages, terrorism, drug abuse, ethnic cleansing, territorial disputes, global climate questions, human trafficking, genocide, economic failure, natural catastrophes, or disease epidemics, for example, generative debaters learn to sidestep the temptation to “debate to win.” These experienced debaters take seriously their global citizenry and turn their efforts toward informing themselves thoroughly about international issues, listening closely during debates to learn from debaters presenting the opposing side of the issue.
and then grappling with possibilities and combinations of all the relevant data toward nonviolently solving international problems.

*Generative debate* is the highest and most complex form of debate: teams of debaters present ideas on opposite sides of an issue with the objective of generating the best arguments possible and the best persuasive positions possible regarding each issue. In generative debate, the debater is always looking for the best choice or the best solution to a problem. As the debate continues, the debater may even find their persuasion shifts toward a position they did not take initially. For example, a city council member may engage a debate with other council members regarding a decision about closing the city swimming pool. The council member might start the debate with the position that the pool should be closed because the city does not have the funds to keep it open.

After supporters for each side of the question present in-depth and substantive explications of the issue and after both teams of debaters have carefully listened to the debate, a generative debater would be open to changing her or his position, now arguing for their new perspective. If the generative debater heard compelling evidence or discovered new information, she or he would not be bound to continue to argue the original stance. She or he might now oppose the pool closing because new evidence shows the budget could accommodate the pool expenses or the debater might offer a new position that supports the pool by introducing untried means for raising funds. The debater might also adjust positions to present even stronger arguments in favor of closing the pool. In each case, the debater would combine their own evidence with information from the opposing side of the question to provide an even richer understanding of the problem and an even fuller range of possible solutions. Generative debaters on both sides of the issue strongly rely on one another to bring to the debate the most important problems as seen from each side of the issue and the most valid evidence regarding those problems. Generative debaters then continue to argue based on a concatenation of all presented information.

The council member initially against holding the pool open might find that the new evidence presents significant merit in support of points on the other side of the question. That council member might cite those points as good reasons to change positions to support an open pool. A generative debater might find value in some combination of points from each side of the issue; that debater might support a position composed of these points, a position different from his or her initial position. Members from both sides of the question also may be searching continually to generate a new alternative not suggested by either side.

In short, generative debaters invest in explicating the issues on both sides of the question thoroughly, comprehensively, and with an eye for implications and consequences of the decision rather than investing energy into a plan for “winning” the debate by “defeating” the other side. In generative debate, possibilities for a collaborative solution—perhaps one that neither of the parties had thought about prior to the debate—underlies the very necessary rankling through the clashes of opposing ideas or values, clashes not only expected but necessary to the process of decision making. Argument and debate act as unique, human means for new discoveries of substance or process. During the conclusion of generative debates, parties take time to trace the dynamic shifting of ideas that occurred during the debate to ensure both that all participants reconcile the
critical needs initially identified and also that all participants understand the anatomy of the decision.

Generative debate is not the norm for debate inside of intercollegiate debate contests. Unfortunately, generative debate is rare even in situations outside of intercollegiate debate. Many if not most debates that occur in the world outside intercollegiate contests still use forms that closely resemble competitive debates, wherein both parties start with a certain position, continue to defend that position throughout the debate, and focus largely on beating their opponents. Such is the usual case in debates where an outside adjudicator is involved. For instance, in legal debates, the defense and prosecution lawyers usually hold tenaciously to their positions (innocence or guilt) throughout the trial. Some forms of arbitration also follow the competitive debate model in situations when parties in a dispute fail to resolve their difference internally, and then agree to (or are required to) turn over the final decision to an outside arbitrator. Only in rare cases will the two sides in an adjudicated debate generate an alternative solution that was not present when the debate began. As debate flourishes at an international level, the possibilities increase for more frequent encounters with generative debate—and perhaps even a model of generative debate that might be taught in the educational realm. As new generations of students enter the debate community, a community now increasingly international in scope, the case for generative debate gains strength.

The intercollegiate debate competitions and debate curricula explained in this textbook teach students to participate in competitive debates inside and outside of the arena of intercollegiate debate tournaments. Following too closely to the competitive model raises many ethical issues, several of which will be discussed in the next chapter. Students of competitive debate will gain some skills useful in generative debate situations, but students should be wary of trying to apply all of the competitive debate skills to generative debate. Competitive debate skills do not automatically transfer to generative debates because some of those skills will be practiced with individual gain in mind. An arguer who uses a strident, competitive manner during interactions within personal relationships or during some community or civil situations can interfere with or even damage interpersonal relationships, often “losing” the debate as well.

Although this textbook has used the categories of competitive debate and generative debate, these are only gross categories and do not exhaust all of the various forms of debate that exist. For instance, legislative debate is usually more competitive than generative but still is different from debate with an outside adjudicator. In legislative debate, members of a legislative or deliberative body argue with one another and in the end must make a collective judgment even if only by a majority vote. Many persons enter a legislative debate with a competitive mindset; while using generative debate may be more difficult and complex, skilled debaters may add value to civil conversations using that method. Legislators must argue and collaborate with one another repeatedly during their terms as officials; therefore, issues of personal relationships among members are much more important than they might be between an advocate and an arbitrator who are not likely be engaged in an ongoing relationship.

Another situation where people use argumentation and debate to try to solve problems or reach mutual decisions involves interpersonal argument (Trapp and Hoff). In these situations, family members, work colleagues, roommates, etc., argue with one another about mutual problems they
face. In these situations participants must find mutual solutions to problems rather than expect the disputes to be settled externally.

In interpersonal arguments, issues of personal relationships are even more important. Involved parties maintain an ongoing relationship so argument is best conducted in a manner that strengthens, or at least does not weaken those relationships. Debaters using certain, competitive debate manners during interpersonal argument risk sending messages of superiority or exclusion to partners during a personal encounter. Since the competitive stance focuses only on the topic and purposely avoids including the character of the speaker in its scope, debaters risk using powerful, nonverbal messages to their partners that the debater’s points and not the partner are the most important features of the conversation. Certain competitive debate skills may not only fail to reach the debater’s goal, but could harm the relationships the debater intended to maintain and improve.

**Summary**

This chapter presented reasons to study debate, the most important of which is to prepare thoughtful, reasoned, informed global citizens. Studying debate also promotes effective decision making at local, national, and international levels. Debate teaches students to examine problems and work toward solutions rather than work toward winning at any cost. Debate helps societies explicate difficult issues and helps individuals, communities, and nations achieve desired goals.

The chapter provided an historical look at argument and debate in China and in the United States, pointing out key developments in each nation’s history where scholars and philosophers encouraged the interchange of ideas through debate. Also reviewed were the histories of educational debate in both nations. Educational debate is the form presently in place in curricula across the world training students through instruction and also through application at debate tournaments. The difficulty of forwarding a model of debate was demonstrated by taking a Chinese perspective of Greco-Roman debate development.

Finally, the chapter introduced the most advanced, productive, and ethical form of debate—generative debate. The ultimate goal of this book is to teach debaters methods of educational debate so that they may develop into excellent debaters capable of participating in generative debate for the benefit of themselves and their societies.
Terms and Concepts From Chapter 1
Check your memory and comprehension by describing or defining these key terms and concepts:

- Greco-Roman argument and debate
- Chinese argument and debate
- Two ways to conceptualize argument
- Argumentation
- Reasons to study debate
- Educational debate
- Problems confronting international debate styles
- Generative debate

Discussion Questions For Chapter 1

- Recount at least one role of argumentation and social debate in ancient and modern China.
- Recount at least one role of argumentation and social debate in ancient and modern Western societies.
- How did educational debate emerge in Western societies?
- Describe the recent developments of educational debate in China.
- Explain the problems inherent in viewing debate from any single perspective.
- Demonstrate at least one example where generative debate would be beneficial.