

Writing Spaces

Assignments & Activities Archive

Analyzing AI-to-AI Debate as Rhetorical Observation

Daewoo Jin

This activity guide is a selection from the *Writing Spaces* Assignment and Activity Archive, an open access companion resource to the Writing Spaces open textbook series.

To access additional selections, visit: <http://writingspaces.org/aaa>.

Assignment and activity selections © 2026 by the respective authors. Unless otherwise stated, these works are licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) and are subject to the Writing Spaces Terms of Use.

To view a copy of this license, visit

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>, email info@creativecommons.org, or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA. To view the Writing Spaces Terms of Use, visit <http://writingspaces.org/terms-of-use>.

All rights reserved. For permission to reprint, please contact the author(s) of the individual articles, who are the respective copyright owners.

Analyzing AI-to-AI Debate as Rhetorical Observation

Daewoo Jin

Overview

This activity aims at developing students' ability to distinguish statistical text generation from human meaning-making by observing how two AI systems exchange directed arguments in response to short, human-written prose. Students analyze rhetorical clarity, disruption, and absence in AI-to-AI debate transcripts, within one class meeting, and in the context of first year composition. Two AI systems debate anonymized sentences drawn from students' earlier reflective writing while students watch and take notes. The debate uses reflective writing because reflective sentences carry a situated speaker and a lived stake, so when models attempt to sustain arguments about personal experience, their breakdowns in rhetorical momentum become more legible to students than they would be with thesis-driven prompts where academic conventions can mask limits of intentionality (Kuhn and Simpson). This design foregrounds the constitutive dimensions of discourse as relational practice that exceeds pattern recognition.

Before the debate, students receive a rubric framing three terms as a classroom heuristic for real-time annotation. Disruption is the central lens as it marks where an exchange loses rhetorical momentum through incoherence, irrelevance (Ghassel et al.), or ineffective repetition (Ju et al.). Clarity names short stretches of coherence that make disruption legible by contrast (Laflen et al.), and absence names disruption that persists across turns, revealing patterns such as reasoning breakdown and confabulation (Nezhurina et al.). As the exchange unfolds, students annotate each turn, tagging clarity or disruption and noting what shifted. When disruption persists,

students mark absence either during the exchange or after.

In discussion, students compare annotations and explain the cues behind their labels, making visible which textual features they treated as most salient. Through this comparative analysis, students begin to articulate how their own writing involves intention, judgment, and sustained development in ways that differ from probabilistic text generation. This observational practice supports the critical evaluation of algorithmic outputs increasingly central to writing pedagogy (Allen and Kendeou) and transfers directly to students' writing and revision processes.

Time Commitment

One class session with optional extension at instructor discretion

Materials

Instructor computer with reliable internet access

Projector or large display

Free ChatGPT account and Google Gemini account, as these two systems are no-cost tools accessible on most classroom computers. Running models from different providers under the same prompt allows students to notice which patterns of disruption recur across platforms and which appear model-specific.

Printed handout for activity steps, brief term reminders, and turn-by-turn note space

Pens or pencils

Activity Process

- To begin, students will receive a one-page rubric defining rhetorical clarity, rhetorical disruption, and rhetorical

absence, and they will add one or two criteria of their own for what clear, focused argumentation looks like in a short exchange.

- Then, students will read the first anonymized reflective sentence that will anchor the debate, and they will predict what a strong human response might need to consider, including any implied stakes.
- Next, the instructor will submit an opening prompt to ChatGPT and Google Gemini on the projected screen. For example, the instructor may use the following prompt for each system: "Here is a sentence written by a student. Argue that the sentence makes a valid and important point. Do not summarize; build a specific argument in support of the claim. Keep your response to one paragraph."
- Once both systems have responded, the instructor will copy one model's response into the other with a counter-prompt such as: "Here is an argument about the same student sentence. Disagree with this argument. Be specific and direct. One paragraph." The instructor will continue this exchange for four to six turns, copying each new response into the opposing system so that the debate builds visibly on the projected screen.
- As the exchange unfolds, students will annotate each turn, labeling moments of clarity or disruption and noting the cue that prompted the label. If disruption continues and intensifies across turns, students will mark absence either during the exchange or after the debate ends.
- Students will repeat the observation for a second debate using a new anonymized student sentence, continuing to track clarity, disruption, and absence with the same rubric language, and the instructor may add additional rounds as

time allows.

- Then, students will select one annotated line for each category (clarity, disruption, and absence), and they will note why the label fits and what cue they weighted most.
- Next, students will share their selected moments with the class, and the instructor will record recurring patterns under three categories: clarity, disruption, absence.
- Finally, students will write a brief reflection that connects the observed patterns to their own drafting and revision, focusing on intention, judgment, and sustained development of ideas.

Learning Outcomes

Students engaging in this activity will:

- Recognize through hands-on observation that writing is not just putting sentences together but making choices they can explain and support
- Check whether AI-generated and human-written texts actually build arguments by looking at whether claims move forward, reasons stay specific, intentions show up, and ideas connect across paragraphs
- Transfer cue-reading practices from AI debate transcripts to their own drafts by spotting places where writing sounds smooth but reasons do not build or where sentences drift without pushing ideas forward
- Develop a revision strategy by checking whether each paragraph responds to and extends prior claims and by naming what a draft still can improve in intention and reasoning

- Tell the difference between writing that simply sounds right and writing that says what they actually mean and can personally support

Learning Accommodations

- All student sentences used in the activity should be anonymized so that students can focus on rhetorical observation without exposing personal details or feeling evaluated as individual writers.
- Deliver instructions verbally and in written form on the handout and the projected screen, and pause briefly between steps for clarification.
- Allow students to annotate with a partner if note-taking is a barrier, one student tracks labels while the other tracks cues, then switch roles if helpful.
- The instructor can provide copies of the debate transcripts by copying and pasting directly from each AI chat window into a document, either digital or printed. After class, students can re-read the exchange, locate key turns more easily, and review their annotations when writing the reflection.

Works Cited

- Allen, Laura Kristen, and Panayota Kendeou. "ED-AI Lit: An Interdisciplinary Framework for AI Literacy in Education." *Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2024, pp. 3-10.
- Ghassel, Abdellah, et al. "Are Large Language Models General-Purpose Solvers for Dialogue Breakdown Detection? An Empirical Investigation." 2024 IEEE Canadian Conference on Electrical and Computer Engineering (CCECE). IEEE,

2024.

- Ju, Tianjie, et al. "On the Adaptive Psychological Persuasion of Large Language Models." arXiv preprint, 2025, <https://arxiv.org/abs/2506.06800>.
- Kuhn, Timothy, and Jayne Simpson. "Discourse, Communication, and Identity." *The Oxford Handbook of Identities in Organizations*, edited by Andrew D. Brown, Oxford University Press, 2020, pp. 150-168.
- Laflen, Ashley, et al. "Incorporating AI Literacy Instruction into Rhetorical Analysis Assignments." *AI-EDU Arxiv*, 2025, <https://journals.calstate.edu/ai-edu/article/view/5123>.
- Nezhurina, Maria, et al. "Alice in Wonderland: Simple Tasks Showing Complete Reasoning Breakdown in State-Of-the-Art Large Language Models." arXiv preprint, 2025, <https://arxiv.org/abs/2406.02061>.