Using Debates as Assessment in a Physiotherapy Capstone Course
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Introduction / Background
Active and engaging teaching and learning activities are likely to provide desirable student learning outcomes. While not a new teaching and learning approach, debating may be considered novel when included in a suite of more traditional teaching and learning activities. Research in other disciplines has identified debating as a method of motivating students and encouraging critical thinking. The aim of our study was to evaluate student satisfaction of a debate assessment item in a physiotherapy capstone course.

Methods of Research / Description of Activity
Students enrolled in Clinical Conference (a final year physiotherapy course at Griffith University) undertook a group debate assessment on medicolegal, ethical, and professional issues. All students were invited to complete two anonymous surveys of their expectations regarding the debate assessment item, and their satisfaction after completing the debate. Students were further invited to participate in a focus group for the same purpose.

Results of Research / Evaluation of Activity / Application
All students participated in the debate (n = 20). Six students (30%) completed the first survey; 16 students (80%) completed the second survey; and seven students (35%) participated in the post-debate focus group. Before the debates, students were apprehensive about the debate, however they felt it would be a beneficial learning experience. After the debates, students claimed they enjoyed the novel assessment item and were supportive of its continued inclusion in the capstone course, however, students were ambivalent on the inclusion of debates in earlier courses in the physiotherapy program.

Conclusions / Implications / ‘Where to from here?’
Physiotherapy students were satisfied with the inclusion of a debate as an assessment item in their final year capstone course.