

# The Value of the Opinion Paper as a Tool for Teaching Critical Thinking and the Art of Persuasion to MBA Students

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## ACADEMIC CONTEXT

**Required assignment for class on International Business Law for a Master in Business Administration.  
Seeks to promote critical thinking and hone persuasion skills in MBA students.**

### ACTIVITY:

- One two-page opinion paper per week on a subject addressed in the class material.
- One student is chosen weekly to present his/her paper and arguments to the class.
- Discussion is then opened to the class and all of the students are required to participate.

### OBJECTIVES:

- To make students active participants in the learning process and teach practical skills.
- To encourage critical thinking and the development of reasoned opinions on topics addressed in the material.
- To have students practice advocacy skills through the oral presentations.
- To teach respect for contrary views and the ability to evaluate the work product of others.

### RESULTS:

- Students develop confidence in their ability to think critically and elaborate reasoned arguments.
- Students become better advocates.
- Students learn to value and respect each other's opinions.

### EVALUATION:

- Evaluation is done by the instructor based on the written work presented by the students and their ability to express their arguments persuasively in class.

### DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED:

- At first students do not feel comfortable expressing opinions openly and honestly without direction from the instructor.
- It takes some time for students to believe in their power to think critically about a subject and to develop their own reasoned opinions.