

# Judging, Evaluation, and the Quality of CEDA Debate

ALAN CIRLIN\*

## "The Serenity Prayer"

God, give us grace to accept with serenity the things that cannot be changed,  
Courage to change the things which should be changed,  
And the wisdom to distinguish the one from the other.

Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971)

The Cross Examination Debate Association was founded in 1974 in an attempt to improve the quality of academic debate.<sup>1</sup> In the fourteen years since its inception, this Association has, in fact, had a profound and favorable influence. On the other hand, a good deal of dissatisfaction has been expressed, much of it by CEDA coaches who feel that, more change is necessary and that a certain amount of backsliding has taken place.<sup>2</sup> This essay argues that feedback is the single most important factor in determining the quality of debates and that more can be done to actualize the goals of CEDA through judging and evaluation than by any other means.

### Feedback and Debate

Intercollegiate debate can be thought of as a complex system involving students, coaches, rules, procedures, and physical resources. These factors are interdependent and the quality of debate heard from tournament to tournament is as much a part of the system as a product of the system. As in any complex system, it is feedback which defines and maintains the outputs. Debaters compete to win, and those communicative sources which provide information about how to win become the focus of attention.

One important feedback cycle in academic debate has been the evolutionary transition of debaters into judges and coaches. Each four-year generation of debaters has been influenced by its experiences and has gone on to apply the standards it learned to the

\**The National Forensic Journal*. IV (Fall 1986), pp. 81-90.

ALAN CIRLIN is an Assistant Professor in Communication and Creative Arts at Indiana University Northwest, Gary 46408.

<sup>1</sup>"The Philosophy and Development of CEDA," James E. Tomlinson, *1983 CEDA Yearbook*, pp. 1-5.

<sup>2</sup>"Report of the Executive Secretary of CEDA—1982," Jack H. Howe.

generations who have followed. The evolution of NDT debate, from the communicative activity it once was, to the information-processing activity it has all too frequently become, is an example of this generational feedback process. Each generation of judges has placed greater emphasis on the logical elements of argumentation and less emphasis on the communicative elements.

The establishment of CEDA by a group of dissatisfied coaches was an attempt to break away from this mainstream feedback cycle in favor of an alternative emphasis on debate as a communicative activity.<sup>3</sup> A number of rule and procedure changes were instituted in an attempt to achieve this end and to underscore the distinction between the old system and the new: cross examination was added to the debate format; value topics were selected in preference to policy topics; topics were announced at the beginning of the school year; the association later went to two topics a year; etc.<sup>4</sup> Another factor which should have worked in favor of establishing an alternate feedback cycle is that CEDA was created by a group of like-thinking coaches and a relatively fresh group of students,

The fact that these changes have not been enough to bring about the desired change suggests that whatever forces led to the creation of NDT debate in its most unacceptable form are at play in CEDA debate as well. If this were not the case, we would expect to see a progressive improvement in the quality of CEDA debates from season to season. That we have not seen such improvement suggests that there may be a feedback mechanism within the larger feedback cycle which has been fundamentally unchanged by the transition from NDT to CEDA, a mechanism which seems to reinforce styles of debate which are considered undesirable by CEDA standards.

#### Sources of Feedback

Since debate is a competitive activity and debaters compete to win, we should therefore focus our attention on those sources of feedback which provide debaters with information on how to win. In general, there are five major sources of such feedback: textbooks, coaches, peers, judges, and decisions.

Many, if not all, debaters are exposed to one debate text or another when first learning about the activity. Often, these texts are a compromise between the attempt to train intercollegiate debaters and the attempt to be marketable to the more general "argumentation and debate class" audience. Examples of this type of text include, *Argument: A Guide to Formal and Informal Debate*

<sup>3</sup>"Statement of Principles," Jack H. Howe, unpublished letter, 9/13/1971.

<sup>4</sup>Tomlinson, pp. 1-5.

(2nd Ed.) by Eisenberg & Ilardo, *Argumentation: Reasoning in Communication* by Jensen, *Introduction to Debate* by Keefe, Harte & Norton, and *Argumentation: Inquiry and Advocacy* by Ziegelmüller & Dause.<sup>5</sup> These texts have too great an emphasis on general theory and general applications to be of practical use to a competitive intercollegiate debater. Other texts, such as *Strategic Debate* by Wood & Goodnight, *Argumentation and Debate: Reasoned Decision Making* (5th Ed.) by Freeley, *Contemporary Debate* by Patterson & Zarefsky, and *Basic Debate* by Fryar & Thomas are much more oriented to the competitive debater.<sup>6</sup>

Unfortunately, even the best texts make promises about the nature of the activity which debaters see exploded in practice:

Debaters should deliver their speeches as if they are talking to each individual. They should convey the impression that they are persons, not computers. (Wood & Goodnight, p. 203)

Rather than using three pieces of evidence, and delivering them at too rapid a rate, for easy comprehension it would be better to use one well-chosen piece of evidence, integrating it carefully into the case and helping to drive it home by use of an effective rate. (Freeley, p. 255)

You are also encouraged to avoid using debate jargon such as conditional counterresolution, inherency, minor repairs and the like. Such terms usually confuse the issue at hand. (Patterson & Zarefsky, p. 288)

Blatant bad manners are no more in order in the cross examination period of a debate than they are in any other formal setting. (Fryar & Thomas, p. 134)

Debaters receive this kind of feedback and then are exposed, round after round, to some of the most rapid, impersonal, complex, technical, and disrespectful speaking styles they may ever hear. And what is worse, they see this style consistently win; they read their texts and talk to their coaches, *but they see what wins*.

Coaches generally pay lip service to the textbook notions of high quality presentation but emphasize the role of evidence and logic-while coaching. Even coaches who aver "ethos" recognize that "logos" is what usually wins rounds. The result is that debaters, while minimally influenced by debate texts and their coaches, are more influenced by other factors. And many CEDA coaches are disturbed when they find out that their own debaters are adopting

<sup>5</sup>Eisenberg & Ilardo (Prentice-Hall: New Jersey, 1980). Jensen (D. Van Nostrand; New York, 1981). Keefe, Hart & Norton (McMillan: New York, 1982). Ziegelmüller & Dause (Prentice-Hall: New Jersey, 1975).

<sup>6</sup>Wood & Goodnight (National Textbook Company: Illinois, 1983). Freeley (Wadsworth: California, 1981). Patterson & Zarefsky (Houghton Mifflin Company: Boston, 1983). Fryar & Thomas (National Textbook Company: Illinois, 1979).

NDT styles in debate rounds.

When debaters interact with peers they attempt to "psych out" the system. Much of the between-round discussions among debaters involve feedback about what arguments and styles of presentation will work (win) against specific cases and before specific judges. If textbooks and coaches can be thought of as primary sources of input into the debate system, peer interaction can be thought of as a fermenting process in which much of this primary information is checked against experience and modified.

All of this suggests that the two most important sources of feedback, the sources which have the greatest real impact on debaters' behavior, are judges and decisions (that is, first (he observation of who wins each round; second, the oral critiques offered by judges after debates; third, the comments made by judges to debaters between rounds; and finally, the comments and reasons for decisions written on debate ballots). I believe that this is the point at which CEDA debate is falling into the same feedback pattern as NDT debate. Fortunately, this is also the point in the feedback cycle over which we as coaches can exert the greatest direct influence.

#### Judging and Evaluation

Recently, a novice team ran up against an experienced team at a major eastern CEDA tournament. The novice team was full of "the theory of debate" and "the importance of ethos" when they hit the experienced team in their first actual round of competition. They were subsequently "destroyed" by the experienced team. However, in addition to crushing the novices with an overwhelming superiority of evidence and argumentation, the experienced team was highly obnoxious and belittled the novices as well. The round was judged by a well known and highly respected CEDA coach who awarded the decision to the novices. The ballot mentioned the one team's rude and blatant bad manners, *but the ostensible "reason for decision" given on that ballot was that the experienced team had neglected to take the novice team's one valid argument seriously enough.* Now one might imagine that this kind of ballot would encourage the experienced debaters to develop better ethos, but the real message seems to be a reinforcement of the NDT philosophy that *every* issue is potentially important, that *every* issue should be taken seriously, that *every* issue should be responded to and shot down with everything you've got. In other words, while the feedback on the ballot indicated that poor ethos disturbed this judge, it was a slight error in logos which cost the experienced team the decision.

But was it really? If so, then the judge in question is more of an NDT judge than a CEDA judge. On the other hand, if not (and I am inclined to take this view), then the logos issue was merely the rationalization which the judge used to justify taking the decision away from the obnoxious team and awarding it to the novices. I believe that it is exactly this type of protective rationalization which reinforces NDT style debate and undermines the goals of CEDA. If we want to see a serious transition toward higher quality presentation and high ethos debaters (in both CEDA *and* NDT), we are going to have to be willing to award decisions and put in writing our reasons as being based on presentational and ethical considerations.

Imagine reading a ballot which came right out and said, "The experienced team was better prepared and far superior on logical grounds. In fact, they would normally win this debate based on superior reasoning skills. *However*, during the course of the debate the experienced team was so rude and obnoxious they destroyed their credibility, and I am therefore voting for the novice team on ethos." Can you imagine the typical debater's reaction to such a ballot? It could serve as a strong confirmation and reaffirmation of the textbook and coaching principles which are generally lost in the practice of debate. Most debaters, however, would dismiss this type of ballot as being a "squirrel" decision from a "turkey" judge. And most coaches, even CEDA coaches, would undercut the object lesson of such a ballot by echoing and reinforcing that opinion.

There is a small cadre of judges who are willing to write such ballots when the occasion demands (which it all too frequently does). And I have found that debaters quickly learn to adjust their style to the expectations of such judges. Coaches, however, are often less pliant (I once heard a graduate student judge pulled aside and harangued for almost twenty minutes by a prominent West Coast coach for having dropped that coach's team on ethos).

In short, if we want to hear a better quality of debate, we must come out of our closets and declare ourselves willing to vote for such quality—we should not limit the expression of our discontent to hallway conversations among ourselves, convention panels, and printed articles, but we should assert them on ballots, in oral critiques, and in conversations with debaters.<sup>7</sup>

In NDT, ethos has frequently come to mean speed and pathos, dead bodies on the flow sheet. Logos, it seems, has become the *raison d'etre* of the activity. If we wish to avoid hearing NDT-style

---

<sup>7</sup>Coaches should also make it a practice to support the decision of judges who vote on ethos and pathos issues.

debate, especially in CEDA rounds, we must be willing to vote openly on ethos and pathos. Debaters pay close attention to what wins; when they see speed and discourtesy lose, *because it is too fast and too discourteous*, they will adjust. We will then see the kind of high ethos presentations we are striving to promote.

#### Ballots

The ballot is another feedback factor which emphasizes the importance of logos to the detriment of ethos and pathos. The American Forensic Association Debate Ballot, long a standard of the debate community, lists six categories of items to be assessed by judges in determining speaker points (and it is worth noting that speaker points are the basis for determining who wins individual speaker trophies and which teams break to out-rounds in cases of tied win/loss records). See Table 1. When these six items are listed under the headings ethos, pathos, and logos we find an obvious and

TABLE 1

American Forensic Association Ballot		
ETHOS	PATHOS	LOGOS
Delivery		Analysis Reasoning Evidence Organization Refutation

overwhelming emphasis on logos to the exclusion of anything else. Is it any wonder our debaters consider logical issues to be the only things of importance in debate rounds when they receive feedback such as this? Even Bud Zeuschner's CSUN ballot, which has been widely adopted by the CEDA community, has a heavy emphasis on logos. Some of the items on the CSUN ballot sound as if they could

TABLE 2

CSUN Debate Ballot		
ETHOS	PATHOS	LOGOS
Delivery Courtesy	Audience Adaptation	Analysis/Definition Evidence/Reasoning Refutation/Rebuttal Organization Cross Examination

be listed in other categories, but an item by item analysis of the "note to judges" which accompanies this ballot suggests that the

<sup>8</sup>Copies of the American Forensic Association Debate Ballot can be obtained from James A. Johnson, AFA Treasurer, The Colorado College, Colorado Springs, CO 80903.

categorization in Table 2 is accurate.<sup>9</sup> The only ballot that I know of which offers a balance among ethos, pathos, and logos is the Spider Debate Ballot, but this ballot has not been widely used by the debate

TABLE 3

Spider Debate Ballot		
ETHOS	PATHOS	LOGOS
Courtesy	Impact	Logic
Delivery	Wit	Support

community."<sup>10</sup> See Table 3. The Spider Debate Ballot has been criticized because it fails to provide enough sub-categories of logos (analysis, reasoning, refutation, organization, etc.). The fact that such criticisms are voiced underscores the hold that logos has in the minds of most judges. Ethos too could be sub-divided into numerous categories (rate, inflection, image, dynamism, etc.) as could pathos (interest, vividness, humor, appropriateness, etc.). But one almost never hears the AFA or CSUN ballots criticized for excluding such items.

In short, I would suggest that in addition to voting for ethos and pathos as well as logos, we develop and use ballots which reflect this pedagogical bias.

#### Rule and Procedure Changes

A number of experiments involving rule and procedure changes have been conducted in an attempt to promote a higher quality of debate. The results of these experiments reinforce the arguments made above concerning the role of feedback in the creation and maintenance of debaters' styles.

In California, for example, the high schools have been operating under a "no flow" rule for a number of years; debaters are still allowed to flow, but judges are not. David Jack, a district NFL chairman and president of the Yosemite Forensic League, indicated that the rule is about six years old and was originally adopted because "too many volunteer judges were turned off by rapid-fire delivery."<sup>11</sup> One of the effects of this rule has been a change in

<sup>9</sup>Copies of the CSUN Debate Ballot can be obtained from Don Brownlee, Executive Secretary of CEDA, California State University, Northridge, CA 91330.

<sup>10</sup>Copies of the Spider Debate Ballot can be obtained from Nina-Jo Moore, Director of Forensics, University of Richmond, Richmond, VA 23173.

<sup>11</sup>From a telephone conversation with David Jack, debate coach at Turlock High School, 9/11/1984.

judges' expectations about debate team burdens. When faced with a rapid-five attack, "first affirmative rebuttal speakers are not expected to cover the case, just the new arguments raised about the plan."<sup>12</sup> Mr. Jack also indicated that one of the important benefits of this rule is that "debaters have learned to analyze their judges and do a better job of adapting to whatever style that judge expects."<sup>13</sup>

Don Vettel, president of the Southern Valley Forensic League and member of the California State Speech Council which was the organization that adopted the "no flow" rule, indicated that this rule has been "very effective at achieving its goal, but (that) perhaps the time has come to go back to flowing."<sup>14</sup> He characterized this rule as "an experiment which has served its purpose."<sup>15</sup>

At the university level, Bob Halle, Forensic Coordinator at El Paso Community College, adopted a no flow rule for his Sun Carnival Tournament in 1983 and planned to do so again in 1984. He indicated that "debaters were initially uptight about the rule and then began to like it as the quality of their presentations improved."<sup>16</sup> Mr. Halle reported that most of the feedback he had received about the experiment "has been positive."<sup>17</sup> Also on the university level, the Spider Invitational Tournament in Richmond, Virginia had to rely on novice judges for three years. As in the case of the Sun Carnival Tournament, debaters were initially uneasy but quickly learned to adjust to their inexperienced judges by adopting a more audience-oriented style of debate.<sup>18</sup>

It should be noted that rule and procedure changes such as those described above are designed to force judges to render decisions based more on ethos and pathos and less on logos. This forces

---

<sup>12</sup>David Jack.

<sup>13</sup>David Jack.

<sup>14</sup>From a telephone conversation with Don Vettel, debate coach at West Bakersfield High School, 9/12/1984.

<sup>15</sup>Don Vittel.

<sup>16</sup>From a telephone conversation with Bob Halle, Forensics Coordinator at El Paso Community College, 9/17/1984.

<sup>17</sup>Bob Halle.

<sup>18</sup>An interesting footnote to this novice judge experiment involves the octafinal round of the 1982 Spider Invitational Tournament. There were exactly 2/3 too few experienced judges to cover the octafinal round in the senior division of CEDA, so instead of having one judge per panel, each panel was made up of one experienced and two novice judges. There was only one upset decision and that was 3-0. In every other panel, the team who was the higher seed advanced. One might have expected a great many 2-1 decisions in which the novice judges voted against the experienced judge, but this was not the case.

debaters to present a style of debate which is more consistent with the goals and philosophy of CEDA. In other words, these rules and procedures are designed to evoke the kind of feedback from judges and the style of debate from students which I believe they should be willing to provide without constraints. And it is worth emphasizing that *these rule and procedure changes worked* although they did have the effect of impairing the logical quality of the debates.

#### Conclusions

Any changes which promote a superior quality of debate, whether imposed from without or evoked from within, are going to have the effect of reducing logos to some degree. If debaters cannot speak at 350 words per minute, they must, perforce, include less material. I believe, however, that internal changes in judging philosophy (a willingness to vote openly on ethos and pathos) is a far better strategy than external changes in rules and procedures (no flow rules or novice judges) for improving the quality of debate. Internal changes leave judges in a position to take accurate notes and provide high quality feedback on all aspects of the debate round. External changes constrain judges in some respects and provide more emphasis in some directions but, perhaps, at too great a cost in others. What is necessary is not a new system, but courage and self-discipline. It would also be helpful to support this CEDA emphasis in judging by developing and adopting new ballots which reflect the characteristics we wish to see in our debaters.

On a highly positive note, I feel far more optimistic about the future of CEDA debate having researched and prepared this report than I did when I began. There is nothing wrong with debaters who can speak like a machine gun, think like a computer, and cite evidence like a Supreme Court Justice, as long as they can also turn into Daniel Webster when the occasion demands. I would apply Don Vettel's analysis to CEDA: the experiment has worked to a large degree. Many debaters are quite capable of making the transition from an NDT judge to a CEDA judge—and this ability to adapt to such widely different audiences must be considered a big plus by almost any rhetorical standards.

Unfortunately, too many CEDA debaters are unable to make this transition and they tend to abandon the CEDA emphasis in favor of a more NDT style. I attribute this to an overabundance of NDT judges, CEDA judges who subscribe to an NDT judging philosophy, and CEDA judges who avoid voting openly on CEDA criteria. If we want a more CEDA style of debate we must increase the percentage of CEDA-style judging and evaluation which our debaters are exposed to.

Individual judges can change the system—at least in this one respect. A single judge who provides strong and consistent feedback in support of a CEDA style of debate will influence a great many debaters during the course of a school year. Enough such judges become a potent force to which debaters must, can, and will adjust. There is no need to wipe out the NDT influence in CEDA. We must merely accentuate the CEDA influence in CEDA. Through our judging and evaluation we can do this.

---

"The Coaches' Prayer"

God, give our debaters the speed and logos to  
impress an NDT judge.

The ethos and pathos to impress a CEDA judge.

And the audience analysis to distinguish the one  
from the other.

(with apologies to  
Reinhold Niebuhr)

# Current Issues in the Cross Examination Debate Association

JAMES E. TOMLINSON\*

In recent years no collegiate forensic organization has experienced the rapid growth and influx of new members that CEDA has been confronted with. In only thirteen years CEDA has been transformed from a small regional association into a large and complex national organization. It is no wonder that such rapid and continuing growth has presented the organization with problems and difficult choices. This paper is designed to examine some of the central areas of concern we must face in both short-term and long-term planning in CEDA. It will present an overview of CEDA, an examination of its evolution from a small scale to a large scale organization, and detail some of the significant issues CEDA must deal with.

The observations presented in this paper are the result of the author's involvement in CEDA, both as an undergraduate debater and as a university director of debate. It is hoped that these observations will contribute in a positive way to the continuing discussion of CEDA's development as an important collegiate organization. This paper is based on the premise that coaching philosophy is a key determinant of what competitive debate will find as acceptable behavior. It is the author's belief that many of the current problems in CEDA arise from a fundamental difference in the philosophy of many who coach teams that enter CEDA tournaments and the philosophy of the organization itself.

To place our discussion in an appropriate perspective, we must consider how and why CEDA began. Since 1920, American college debaters have been furnished with a national topic for competition.<sup>1</sup> This topic has provided the basis for a national championship in debate for individual teams since 1946.<sup>2</sup> This debate format and organization, which is now referred to as NDT, continues to be a

\**The National Forensic Journal*, IV (Fall 1986), pp. 91-103.

JAMES E. TOMLINSON is Assistant Professor and Chair in Communication Studies at Bloomsburg University, PA 17815. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Speech Communication Association National Convention in Chicago, November 1984.

<sup>1</sup>C. William Colburn, *Strategies of Educational Debate*, (Boston: Holbrook, 1972), p. 234.

<sup>2</sup>J. H. Howe, *Intercollegiate Speech Tournament Results*, vol. 14 (Long Beach, CA: privately published, 1975), p. 6.

substantial part of competitive collegiate debate. Despite the many positive influences that NDT has provided, there were a number of valid criticisms expressed as well. In the late 1960's, an increasing number of forensic directors and debaters were expressing concerns about the direction that collegiate debate was taking. There were apprehensions voiced about, traditional debate becoming too narrow in its topic and proposition selection, the excessive use of evidence, the highly specialized rapid delivery system, and a perceived decline in the use of analysis in debate rounds.<sup>3</sup> There was also a growing interest in the cross examination format. As a direct result of the concerns mentioned above, CEDA was established to provide debaters with viable and attractive alternatives.

Shortly after the announcement of the national topic for the 1971-72 debating year, Tim Browning developed plans for sponsoring an "off-topic" division of debate at the Desert Invitational Tournament at the University of Arizona. This off-topic division was an attempt to provide tournament participants with an alternative format to the NDT divisions. Encouraged by Browning's plans, Dr. Jack Howe from California State University-Long Beach suggested that a league should be formed in the southwest to guarantee continued alternative debate topics and formats. During the months of July and August 1971, Dr. Howe contacted a number of other forensic directors and found them enthusiastic about the idea of creating such an alternative debate league.<sup>4</sup>

On September 13, 1971, a "Statement of Principles" was distributed to the interested parties. Four major objectives for this new association were outlined:

1. To seek a method of restoring a better balance among evidentiary support, sound analysis, and effective delivery in debate than is currently encouraged by national propositions that emphasize evidence almost to the exclusion of these other areas.
2. To provide the opportunity for diversifying a student's collegiate debate experience by making available the cross examination format and by offering topics in addition to the national proposition.
3. To try and arouse an interest in debate among college students for whom a current national topic might have little appeal, by furnishing them with an alternative which may be more timely and interesting.

---

<sup>3</sup>William Reynolds, "Theory and Practice in Forensics." In James H. McBath ed., *Forensics as Communication*. (Skokie, IL: National Textbook Co., 1975), p. 111.

<sup>4</sup>James Tomlinson. "A History of the Cross Examination Debate Association," unpublished paper, California State University, Long Beach, 1975, p. 3.

4. To create a healthy rivalry among debate squads, as opposed to that between individual teams, as schools compete in the standings for sweepstakes awards at the end of the season.<sup>5</sup>

The name proposed and subsequently adopted for the organization was the Southwestern Cross Examination Debate Association. Once formally organized, SCEDA attempted to translate these principles into reality. One major innovation of SCEDA was the decision to recognize a school's total performance over the entire year by awarding a championship to an institution's debate squad, rather than individual teams. Points for this championship were awarded on the basis of one point for each preliminary round won by a debate team and one point for each ballot awarded a team in elimination rounds. At the conclusion of the SCEDA debate season, the school with the most points would be awarded the championship.

The topic selected for use in the 1971-72 inaugural SCEDA season was, "RESOLVED: That the United States should withdraw all its ground combat forces from bases located outside the Western Hemisphere." The first SCEDA tournament was held at the University of the Pacific on November 12-13, 1971. In that first year, seven SCEDA tournaments were held, and debate teams from eighteen colleges and universities representing six states participated.<sup>6</sup>

As the association grew in membership and national appeal, a number of significant changes took place. During the 1972-73 season a new rule was developed which altered the method of point tabulation for the sweepstakes. Only the top two teams from each school participating in a particular tournament would be counted for the sweepstakes. This rule was designed to prevent a school from flooding a tournament with a large number of teams, therefore gathering sweepstakes points on the basis of the entry size rather than on the quality of the school's entry. Two more major events occurred in 1974. First, a constitution was adopted by members of the organization. Secondly, because SCEDA tournaments had begun to attract teams from all over the country, the organization's name was changed to the Cross Examination Debate Association. By the 1975-76 season, CEDA was growing at such a rapid pace that concern was expressed that only schools with large debate budgets could travel across the expanding circuit to gather sweep-

<sup>5</sup>J. H. Howe, "Statement of Principles," unpublished letter. Long Beach, CA, 13 September 1971.

<sup>6</sup>Tomlinson, "A History of the Cross Examination Debate Association," p. 4.

stakes points. The CEDA membership responded with a rule designed to help ensure that the quality of the performance would be the primary determinant of who won the championship, not the amount of money available for debate trips. The new rule dictated that for the sweepstakes totals, only the six best performances of each school over the entire year would be counted. Therefore, a school with limited resources that performed well in six CEDA tournaments would not be at a disadvantage when compared to a school which could attend a far greater number of tournaments.

As for CEDA's stated goal of offering college debaters a broader range of issues to consider, the association has made significant contributions. Although a non-policy proposition was used in 1921, each of the NDT national propositions since then have been ones relating to policy.<sup>7</sup> Recent attempts to include non-policy propositions in the NDT format have been actively opposed. There were some in the debate community who found this a stifling influence on the attempts to diversify the college debater's experience,<sup>8</sup> In CEDA's thirteen years, fifteen (out of a total of twenty) of the propositions selected for debate at the association's tournaments have been intentionally worded to be non-policy or value-oriented. The opportunity of debating a different type of proposition has been often cited as one of the primary attractions that CEDA holds for many debaters.<sup>9</sup>

Another early innovation concerning topic selection by CEDA, was the use of two topics in a single year. Between 1972 and 1975, one topic was debated for the fall semester and a second topic for the spring. The purpose of this dual topic approach was to shorten the length of time that a particular topic was debated, it was believed by many that, debating a single topic for an entire academic year was stimulating some of the abuses previously cited.<sup>10</sup> This two topic approach was abandoned in 1975 but reinstated in 1980.

As mentioned previously, a major concern of the early CEDA membership was the rapid delivery that has become characteristic of NDT. Many asked if debate can be used to demonstrate the values of research, sound logical argument, the use of evidence,

<sup>7</sup>Colburn, *Strategies of Educational Debate*, p. 239.

<sup>8</sup>Beverly Kelley, "An Alternative to NDT Debate," In Don Brownlee, ed., *Contributions on the Philosophy and Practice of CEDA*, (CEDA, 1981), p. 9.

<sup>9</sup>Jan Vasilus, "Value Proposition Debate: A Pragmatic Approach," In, Don Brownlee, ed., *Perspectives on Non-Policy Argument*,(CEDA, 1980), p. 49.

<sup>10</sup>J. H. Howe, "Statement of Principles," unpublished letter, Long Beach, CA, 13 September 1971.

then why should it not also emphasize basic principles of effective delivery? Rieke and Sillars remind us that ". . . as in such specialized argument systems as law, educational debate has many unique protocols in communication."<sup>11</sup> Thus, in NDT today, the college debater is encouraged and rewarded in developing a highly specialized style of delivery characterized by its rapid pace. Freeley reports that some debaters have been "clocked" at 245 words per minute and notes that "... fractured language and stylistic faults are almost inevitable at such speeds."<sup>12</sup> An argument can certainly be made that this rapid delivery system is a natural part of the situational constraint placed upon the debaters in some competitive arenas. The major point made by many in CEDA has been that such an approach in the competitive arena is not necessary, and there are alternative models. CEDA has consistently attempted to place a value on a delivery approach suitable for a more generalized audience.<sup>13</sup>

Finally, while the National Developmental Conference on Forensics has recommended that ". . . more frequent use of alternative events and formats in forensics should be encouraged. . . ."<sup>14</sup> The use of a cross examination, or Oregon style, was rare in tournaments prior to 1975. Examining the 1974-75 debate season, we find two hundred and sixty-two debate tournaments sponsored nationwide. In only twenty-one (or 8%) of those tournaments was a cross examination format offered in at least one of the debate divisions. The decision to include cross examination in NDT debate was finally made in 1975. Some suggest this was in direct response to the rapid growth of CEDA. It should be noted that for the four years previous to that decision, CEDA had been providing a significant portion (fifteen out of the twenty-one, for 75%, in 1974-75) of the cross examination opportunities available to the college debater.<sup>15</sup>

From a modest beginning in 1971, only eleven member institutions from six states, CEDA now has a national membership of over 200 schools. Those institutions represent every section of the country. Appendix A details the annual growth of CEDA.

<sup>11</sup>Richard D. Rieke and Malcolm O. Sillars, *Argumentation and the Decision Making Process*, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1975), p. 299.

<sup>12</sup>Austin J. Freeley, *Argumentation and Debate: Rational Decision Making*, (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1976), p. 396.

<sup>13</sup>J. H. Howe, "CEDA's Objectives: Lest We Forget," In Don Brownlee, ed., *Contributions on the Philosophy and Practice of CEDA*, (CEDA, 1981), pp. 1-3.

<sup>14</sup>*Forensics as Communication*, p. 325.

<sup>15</sup>Howe, *Intercollegiate Speech Tournament Results*, p. 97.

Now that we have reviewed CEDA's past, we need to turn our attention to some of the current issues that will influence its future. For the purposes of this paper, these current issues have been placed into three topic areas; organizational growth, philosophical misperceptions, and the nature of value debate.

#### *Organizational Growth*

The original vision of CEDA was one of a regional association that was small enough to be easily and informally administered. The rapid and largely unexpected growth of the organization forced the association to not only adopt a constitution and bylaws, but to elect regional representatives. Any organization that moves so rapidly from a small scale to such a large scale must expect some stress to its administrative functions and even its goals and objectives as an organization.

CEDA has tried to reorganize its administrative units so that tabulation of results, approval of tournaments, and selection of topics continue to serve their original purpose. Even the initial idea of a single annual business meeting for the membership has been altered so that CEDA now holds multiple meetings, including one at Speech Communication Association conventions. Thus, it can be argued that the administrative functions of the organization have been altered to adapt to the new demands of the evolving and growing national association. To examine what has happened to the organization's goals, we need to look at how this rapid growth has led to misperceptions about the nature of CEDA debate.

#### *Philosophical Misperceptions*

A decade ago the most often heard question about CEDA was "what is CEDA?" Today the question seems to be "how can we join?" Therein lies a crucial problem. CEDA has become very popular, but is not very well understood. Initially, CEDA attracted members and participants to its tournaments who clearly shared strong philosophical commitment to debate which had the characteristics outlined by the "Statement of Principles" restated earlier in this paper. CEDA debates were noticeably different from NIT debates. That was no accident; it was the clear intention of the association. It was widely believed that CEDA would provide an alternative, not simply in topic and format (the use of cross examination) but also in philosophy. CEDA presented an alternative model of what debate could be like. CEDA debaters were encouraged to use a more audience centered delivery system and to rely on analysis and reasoning as well as accumulating evidence. These were seen as substantive, not cosmetic, differences with NDT debate.

Unfortunately, one early misconception was that CEDA required no evidence. During tournaments where new teams and coaches appeared, it was not unusual to find that a judge penalized a team for even using one piece of evidence. It was this misconception, and the increasing number of new schools participating, that stimulated the use of "Notes for Judges." (See Appendix C for a sample "Notes for Judges") These brief notes explained the basic philosophy of CEDA, so that judges would evaluate CEDA debates not on the basis of their experiences and expectations in NDT, or on some misperception of CEDA, but on the basis of what the association wanted CEDA debates to be characterized by. In addition, several tournament directors developed their own debate ballots to emphasize the criteria CEDA was promoting as an alternate model of debate.

While these remedies appeared to work for a while, they have apparently lost their usefulness. In a 1981 study of CEDA judges, Robert Norton found that only 27% of those surveyed agreed that the "Notes to Judges" influenced their judging of CEDA debates. Norton also reported that only 60% of the debate judges stated that they judged CEDA differently from NDT.<sup>16</sup> Norton's study was conducted at the University of Nevada-Reno debate tournament, certainly in CEDA's strongest area of the country. While 60% may seem a substantial figure, many would expect a much greater percentage of judges to view CEDA differently from NDT. If such a study were conducted that included more of the newer CEDA participants, especially from other regions of the country, it seems plausible that the results would reveal even fewer judges who approach CEDA and NDT differently. Norton's study and one conducted by Wayne Thompson, and others from Pi Kappa Delta, seem to support the general hypothesis that misperceptions about CEDA's approach to debate are an important problem.<sup>17</sup>

An organization is a social instrument which individuals choose to join because it satisfies some need through that membership. The satisfaction that individuals may receive from membership in an organization may come from two general categories: (1) a shared philosophical commitment to the organization's goals and objectives, and (2) some reward system which provides benefits not available outside the organization.<sup>18</sup> CEDA was envisaged as an

<sup>16</sup>Robert K. Norton, "Empirical Evidence on the Judging Criteria in Use in the Cross Examination Debate Association," *The Forensic of Pi Kappa Delta* 66 (Spring 1981), pp. 10-14.

<sup>17</sup>Wayne Thompson et al., "What is CEDA Debate?" *The Forensic of Pi Kappa Delta* 66 (Spring 1981), pp. 4-9.

<sup>18</sup>Amitai Etzioni, *Modern Organizations* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1964, pp. 4-5.

organization which would fulfill certain needs in the collegiate debate community that were not being addressed adequately by any other organization. Both the philosophical approach to debate and the unique reward system were seen as complementary and inseparable ingredients which would attract individuals to the organization. Over the years, it has been the innovative and unique system of rewards CEDA offers that has been the focus of most of the attention the association has received. National rankings (based on accumulated point totals) are regularly published, and awards are presented to several institutions each year not only for national performance but also for regional accomplishments. Creative and challenging debate topics are offered and non-policy propositions have been used.

Each of these unique qualities attest persuasively to the dynamic and creative nature of CEDA. Not surprisingly, these innovations seem to be the primary attraction for many who participate in CEDA. Perhaps the attraction of these reward systems, and how useful they prove in helping justify a debate budget, have overshadowed the philosophical foundations and fundamental goals of the organization. Thus, the organization has experienced growth in numbers, but may have suffered a loss in commitment to its original goals through the misperceptions recounted here. It must be recalled that CEDA's fundamental purpose was to provide a substantive and creative alternative to NDT. Its secondary purpose was to provide a wider system of rewards for debate programs.<sup>19</sup>

#### *Value-oriented Debate*

It is a common occurrence on the circuit and in journal articles to find CEDA and "value" debate mentioned as if the two are inseparable. Many seem to have the impression that CEDA was formed to present value debate opportunities to the collegiate debater. It is this incorrect assumption that leads some to believe that value and policy resolutions are the primary difference between CEDA and NDT. While CEDA has purposefully chosen value-oriented topics since 1975, CEDA's first six debate topics (1971-Fall 1975) were policy resolutions (see Appendix B for a complete list of all CEDA resolutions). It is vital for an adequate understanding of CEDA to appreciate that CEDA's basic philosophy of debate is applicable to non-policy and policy debate alike. The use of value-oriented topics in American collegiate debate is an innovation CEDA has been proud to claim. Since 1975, the literature on this area has greatly increased due to the awakened

---

<sup>19</sup>Howe, "CEDA's Objectives: Lest We Forget," pp. 1-3.

interest these topics have stimulated. Although it may be quite a long time before a single persuasive model of value debate emerges, this creative and fascinating process must be encouraged. The emergence of non-policy topics on the national level has generated innovative behavior by debaters and challenging new perspectives on what models of competitive debate may include.

Unfortunately, many in CEDA have opted for increased reliance on policy devices in their approach to CEDA's topics rather than take on the challenge of new and more appropriate devices for debating values. With the introduction of the first value-oriented topic in 1975, many in CEDA were excited by the prospect of approaching a topic in a new and creative manner. Plans were considered inappropriate devices for arguing values. Those debate teams that attempted to use plans found negative teams willing and able to demand that the affirmative meet the intent of the resolution and issue value based arguments rather than a policy manifestation of a value (the plan). CEDA judges invariably found those plans to be an inappropriate part of a debate over values. More recently, plans and other policy considerations (although thinly disguised), have reappeared in value debate. These devices are now becoming increasingly accepted by judges in CEDA rounds.

In previous discussions of how to deal with CEDA's topics, some of this author's colleagues have argued that their debaters have the right to treat any resolution in any way they choose. While this position seems defensible from a point of view that values creativity, the reality is that such a view has not encouraged new and innovative ways of arguing values, but simply reintroduced policy considerations and debate tactics which CEDA was formed to avoid. In addition, we cannot ignore the fact that the CEDA membership has consistently selected debate resolutions that have intentionally avoided the traditional wording of policy resolutions. To ignore the "intent of the resolution" is to ignore the basic goals of the organization itself. Some teams have tried to strike a balance by presenting both value criteria and a plan in the same affirmative presentation. Is it any wonder then, that there are those in CEDA who argue that rapid delivery and increased evidence reading have begun to emerge in CEDA?<sup>20</sup>

### *Conclusions*

In this paper it has been suggested that CEDA faces some important problems. It must be recognized that any growing, healthy, and dynamic organization may face similar difficulties.

<sup>20</sup>Howe, "CEDA's Objectives: Lest We Forget," pp. 1-3.

Fortunately, CEDA's challenge is to adapt to and manage growth, not decline. Organizational change must, however, be managed and monitored, especially when the fundamental goals of the organization are called into question.

For CEDA, the greatest challenge comes from the apparent difference in the philosophy of some who judge CEDA tournaments, and the fundamental goals of the association. Debaters are quick to adapt their behavior to that which will be rewarded by judges. No amount of restatement of the organization's goals will alter the current trend unless there is some influence on those who coach and judge in CEDA which will encourage them to adhere to those goals.

CEDA was created to provide alternatives for collegiate debaters. That purpose continues to serve as part of the organization's basic philosophy. The alternatives offered were intended to be far more than simply a different topic. CEDA intended to provide debaters with the opportunity to choose a debate style and philosophy which was unique. Most recently, it has become increasingly difficult to find anything to distinguish a CEDA debate from a NDT debate, *except* the topic. Such a blurring of the two approaches to debate services only to limit our choices and opportunities.

Unless the leadership and membership of CEDA recognize and clearly define the problems, there is little hope that solutions can be found. The organization is one that has shown remarkable growth and flexibility. It is now time to carefully assess the basic principles and goals of CEDA and stimulate interest and commitment to them. How this should be done will require a great deal of careful discussion and planning. Without such actions CEDA and NDT may well be "different" in name only. Such a situation would deny the opportunity for the alternative experiences in collegiate debate we all wish to preserve.

## APPENDIX A

---

ANNUAL GROWTH OF CEDA

---

Year	Number of schools participating in CEDA
1971-1972	18
1972-1973	25
1973-1974	28
1974-1975	47
1975-1976	50
1976-1977	60
1977-1978	62
1978-1979	119
1979-1980	173
1980-1981	207
1981-1982	239
1982-1983	257
1983-1984	273

---

Sources: *CEDA Report*, final for each year 1972-1984.

---

## APPENDIX B

---

TOPICS SELECTED BY CEDA 1971-1984

---

1971-1972		Resolved: That the United States should withdraw all its ground combat forces from bases located outside the Western hemisphere.
1972-1973	(Fall)	Resolved: That the penal system in the United States should be significantly improved.
	(Spring)	Resolved: That the United States should seek to restore normal diplomatic and economic relations with the present government of Cuba.
1973-1974	(Fall)	Resolved: That victimless crimes should be legalized.
	(Spring)	Resolved: That the United States should reduce its commitment to Israel.
1974-1975	(Fall)	Resolved: That the federal government should grant amnesty to all those who evaded the draft during the Vietnam war.
	(Spring)	Resolved: That American television has sacrificed quality for entertainment.

- 1975-1976 Resolved: That education has failed its mission in the United States
- 1976-1977 Resolved: That legal protection of accused persons in the United States unnecessarily hinders law enforcement agencies.
- 1977-1978 Resolved: That affirmative action programs have been deleterious in their effects.
- 1978-1979 Resolved: That a United States foreign policy significantly decreased toward the furtherance of human rights is desirable.
- 1979-1980 Resolved: That compulsory national service for all qualified U.S. citizens is desirable.
- 1980-1981 (Fall) Resolved: That protection of the national environment is a more important goal than the satisfaction of American energy demands.
- (Spring) Resolved: That activism in politics by religious groups harms the American political process.
- 1981-1982 (Fall) Resolved: That unauthorized immigration into the United States is seriously detrimental to the United States.
- (Spring) Resolved: That the American judicial system has overemphasized the rights of the accused.
- 1982-1983 (Fall) Resolved: That a unilateral freeze by the United States on the production and development of nuclear weapons would be desirable.
- (Spring) Resolved: That individual rights of privacy are more important than any other Constitutional right.
- 1983-1984 (Fall) Resolved: That U.S. higher education has sacrificed quality for institutional survival.
- (Spring) Resolved: That federal government censorship is justified to defend the national security of the United States.

## APPENDIX C

---

**NOTES TO JUDGES**  
(representative sample)

---

The Cross Examination Debate Association (CEDA) began its work in 1971 as a reaction to the direction being taken by national intercollegiate debate. It was apparent that increasingly fewer contemporary college students had the time or the interest required for amassing the thousands of evidence cards necessary for debate on traditional national topics. CEDA seeks to offer debaters an alternative.

CEDA encourages debaters to approach a resolution directly rather than developing the strained and narrow interpretations that have appeared in traditional debate. Such "squirrel" cases and the tendency for negative teams to "spread" are discouraged in CEDA. CEDA encourages debates which would be understood by an audience of laypersons, thus the over use of jargon and "oral shorthand" is discouraged.

Recently CEDA has chosen for its national topics, propositions of value. Probably the greatest advantage to this is that it removes the plan from the affirmative's obligations in a debate, and the plan attacks from the negatives. The reason for the excessive speed of many contemporary debaters is thus removed. Certainly CEDA debaters are expected to support the arguments they advance, but we strive for a judicious balance of evidence, analysis, reasoning, and persuasive delivery. The debate should not become an evidence reading session.

CEDA encourages judges to reward debaters who:

1. Use an effective delivery pattern that would be suitable for audience debate.
2. Address the debate topic directly and as a whole.
3. Present criteria and reasons for their positions.
4. Avoid the over-use of evidence.

CEDA tournaments are now offered in every section of the country. If you are interested in learning more about the association and its national sweepstakes awards, contact the Executive Secretary at the address below:

Dr. J. H. Howe Executive Secretary, CEDA  
Department of Speech Communication  
California State University—Long Beach  
Long Beach, California 90840

---

Source: Notes for judges, distributed at the 49'er Invitational Forensics Tournament, Cal State Long Beach, 1975 and 1976. Also used in other tournaments in the Southwest.

---

# Improving the Quality of CEDA Debate

BILLY J. HILL, JR.\*

In recent years the Cross Examination Debate Association has grown considerably.<sup>1</sup> The rapid growth of CEDA implies broad support for the goals and principles of the organization. Few, if any, CEDA coaches, for example, would take exception to the notion that the purpose of CEDA debate is to teach students to develop sound arguments by using a reasonable blend of evidence and analysis and to deliver those arguments in a clear, understandable, persuasive manner for expert and lay audiences alike.<sup>2</sup> Ultimately, the quality of CEDA debates rests with us, the coaches, since we are the people primarily responsible for how CEDA debate is practiced, at least within our debate squads. How painstakingly we articulate, attempt to implement, and reinforce debate practices consistent with the CEDA purpose will have a decided impact on not only how well CEDA fulfills its purpose, but more importantly, on the overall quality of CEDA debate.

The purpose of this paper is to help determine how we as coaches can help improve the quality of CEDA debate. To accomplish that task, I will first define some of the important problems and practices which, I believe, decrease the overall quality of CEDA debate. Following that, I will attempt to offer some strategies and suggestions that coaches might want to consider as potential solutions to these problems.

## SECTION ONE: PROBLEMS IN CEDA DEBATE

The problems I will identify are based on my observations as a CEDA coach and judge, on frequent discussions with other coaches, and on the results of a survey research study designed to tap the perceptions of both coaches and debaters currently active in CEDA

---

\**The National Forensic Journal*, IV (Fall 1986), pp. 105-121.

BILLY J. HILL, JR. is Assistant Professor and Director of Debate in Speech Communication at the University of North Carolina, Charlotte 28213.

<sup>1</sup>Between 1971 and 1984 and the number of schools participating in CEDA grew from 18 to 273. Don Brownlee, "A Projection of CEDA's Near Future," *CEDA Yearbook 1984*, Don Brownlee ed., (Cross Examination Debate Association, 1984), p. 93.

<sup>2</sup>Jack H. Howe, "CEDA's Objectives: Lest We Forget," *Contributions on the Philosophy and Practice of CEDA* (Cross Examination Debate Association, 1981), p. 1.

in the Southeast.<sup>3</sup> I do not mean to imply that all CEDA debaters exhibit the weaknesses I will mention, nor that the weaknesses are particularly unique to the CEDA forum.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, I am not attempting to embark on a search for the "perfect CEDA debater" anymore than I intend to chastize the beginning debaters who exhibit weaknesses simply because they have not had sufficient time to develop their skills. My sole aim is to call our attention to the *types* of problems CEDA practitioners can encounter. Within this context, four broad problem areas will be explained: using and misusing evidence, using and misusing debate theory, developing a communicative delivery, and strengthening analysis and reasoning. Each problem area will be explained in terms of the CEDA philosophy, and illustrated by the specific weaknesses which typify the problem.

#### Using And Misusing Evidence

Evidence is a crucial component of each debate. The CEDA philosophy, however, does not attempt to make the collection and presentation of great amounts of evidence an end unto itself. Rather, by stressing the need for "balanced use" of evidence, CEDA attempts to incorporate a fundamental principle of sound argumentation: that advocates shoulder a responsibility to support and substantiate their claims in a communicatively effective manner.<sup>5</sup> Four specific weaknesses characterize the problem area of evidence to which I am referring.

First, many CEDA debaters fail to meet the appropriate balance of evidence that CEDA encourages. Extremes are apparent at both ends of the spectrum. We hear debaters declare self-righteously, "evidence is unnecessary—this is CEDA not NDT," while others

<sup>3</sup>A survey questionnaire designed to elicit individual perceptions of weaknesses of CEDA debaters was completed and returned by ten active coaches at two Southeastern CEDA tournaments. In addition, twenty-eight active CEDA debaters completed a questionnaire designed to elicit their perception of personal weaknesses.

<sup>4</sup>A number of recent articles have discussed similar problems among NDT debaters. See, for example: Thomas A. Hollihan, "Conditional Arguments and the Hypothesis Testing Paradigm: A Negative Rebuttal," *Journal of the American Forensic Association*, 19 (Winter 1983), pp. 186-190. A number of articles have also addressed implications regarding the practice of CEDA debate. See for example: Thomas Hollihan, Patricia Riley, and Curtis Austin, "A Content Analysis of Selected CEDA and NDT Judges' Ballots," *Argument in Transition: Proceeding of the Third Summer Conference on Argumentation* ed. by David Zarefsky, Malcolm O. Sillars, and Jack Rhodes, (Annandale, Va.: Speech Communication Association, 1983), pp. 871-882; Robert Rowland, "The Philosophical Presuppositions of Value Debate," in *Argument in Transition . . .*, pp. 822-836.

<sup>5</sup>Howe, p. 1.

read card after card as quickly as they can. Although quantitative standards for achieving an "acceptable blend" of evidence-analysis cannot be universally defined, extremes such as those just mentioned are certainly symptomatic of a fundamental misunderstanding of the CEDA outlook, and decrease the overall quality of our debates.

A second problem is that many CEDA debaters seem unable to use productively the evidence they introduce. Many CEDA debaters seem to assume that the knowledge and information contained on their index cards of briefs is somehow magically beamed to the judge who is both an expert on the topic area and a humanoid computer capable of processing, applying and evaluating their evidence for them. As a result, it is not uncommon to hear debaters speak of "Smith in 83" and "Johnson in 84" and assume that their judge actually knows who Smith is, who Johnson is, what their report or study was about, and how Smith and Johnson were able to draw the conclusions they did. Compounding this problem are the debaters who assume the humanoid computer in the room—the judge—will be better able to place the piece of evidence in its appropriate context in the round than the debater ever could. As a result of this assumption, many debaters never attempt to label, explain, or otherwise give any meaningful referent or descriptive clarity to their evidence. Perhaps the biggest culprit, however, is the debater who is misguided by the assumption that reading a 4 x 6 card and making an argument are synonymous. "Why explain the card?" this debater asks. "If I do that I only waste time and the judge knows what it means anyway." Cross-examination frequently makes this problem painfully obvious when our debaters are asked to explain what a piece of evidence says and can merely respond by re-reading the card. While many of our debaters do use their evidence well, many still demonstrate that they do not understand its use by improper introductions, explanations and application of the evidence to the *process* of getting their claims accepted. In short, in their use of evidence, many CEDA debaters illustrate their lack of concern or understanding for evidence credibility, conceptual clarity, and, ultimately, usability of their evidence.

A third component of the problem of evidence use is the inability of CEDA debaters to analyze evidence introduced by their opponents. While I do not expect debaters to be able to analyze carefully and indict evidence their opponents used but were unable to explain, it does seem reasonable that we should expect CEDA debaters to be able to demonstrate some fundamental under-

standing of the process of evidence analysis for properly used evidence. Too many debaters accept as unchallengable truth statements contained on 4 x 6 cards simply because the source is "an expert in the area." Too many debaters are willing to jettison their own evidence simply because their opponent presented an "updated" piece of testimony or set of statistical data. In short, many of our debaters do not exercise a healthy skepticism for the accuracy and generalizability of evidence used by their opponents. Paradoxically, however, it is equally disturbing to witness debaters posing as neo-statisticians who chastize their opponents for using evidence based on "a simple analysis of variance when multiple linear regression analysis would have been more appropriate." It is also disconcerting to witness debaters who continually ask for "the methodology of the study" but never attempt to explain why understanding the methodological procedures is important in examining the credibility of a particular piece of evidence in the context in which it was presented. Debaters who attempt to analyze evidence by pointing out qualifiers such as "some," "might," "seemed to be," etc., not only become tiresome but illustrate that they are on the futile search for the perfect piece of evidence as well.<sup>6</sup> Many of our "critically-enlightened" debaters also fail to attach any significance whatsoever to their parade of evidence challenges. While we should applaud their critical outlook, we should also insist that they establish a meaningful and reasonable context for their critical inquiry. If evidence is an important component of CEDA debate, understanding some of the basic principles of analysis of evidence is a reasonable expectation for CEDA debaters to meet. Unfortunately some CEDA debaters demonstrate their inability to effectively analyze evidence all too frequently.

The fourth and final problem regarding the use of evidence is failure to implement fully ethical responsibilities for evidence use. Many of the coaches and debaters I surveyed felt that they had observed situations where evidence was distorted, taken out of context, or misapplied. I do not want to believe that any CEDA debater would be guilty of any of these infringements intentionally. However, if CEDA promotes nothing else it should promote a strong commitment to ethically responsible argumentative behavior. The fact that questions of ethical responsibility arise suggests that perhaps we as coaches have not done as much as we

---

<sup>6</sup>Walter Ulrich addresses this concept in "The Use and Misuse of Evidence in Debate," *Debate Issues* (The Alan Company, January 1983), pp. 10-15.

need to do to make certain our debaters understand the ethical responsibilities of research, interpretation, and use of evidence.

#### Using And Misusing Debate Theory

The development of a solid theoretical foundation for CEDA debate is certainly in its infancy. The CEDA philosophy, however, should not, nor do I believe it intends to, exclude discussion of theory from its debates since arguments made in a theoretical vacuum lose much of their potency, and ultimately decrease the quality of debate by rendering arguments shallow and less interesting. In addition, the debate laboratory can be a useful testing ground for theory development.<sup>7</sup> The CEDA philosophy should, however, demand that debate about debate theory be communicative—that it adds meaning and importance to the interaction.

I am certain that as coaches and judges each of us has experienced the frustration of listening to debaters mangle their explanation of debate theory. Some debaters attempt to inundate us with theoretical positions during the course of a debate. Unfortunately, many of these debaters do not utilize their real or imagined knowledge of debate theory productively. It goes without question that if debaters cannot articulate theoretical positions, they will have little success in using those theoretical positions in any meaningful fashion. Too frequently debaters attempt to substitute the use of "theoretical taglines" such as "no justification," "v.o.'s are illegitimate" and "inherency doesn't matter" for a meaningful explanation of the theoretical basis of their claim. Such behavior renders the argumentative interaction confused and unproductive. In addition, the use of "theoretical taglines" illustrates to the judge that while the debater has *some* knowledge of the theoretical position, he/she is obviously misguided by the notion that theoretical positions are monolithic concepts incapable of varied interpretation. Certainly, not enough CEDA debaters attempt to set the stage for their theoretical argument by explaining and defending the *basis* of their theoretical claims. The net result of either of these deficiencies is a marked void in the CEDA debate process; theoretical positions become something to fear rather than something viewed as being capable of enhancing the intellectual rigor of our activity.

#### Developing A Communicative Delivery

CEDA developed largely in response to perceived excesses of NDT debate.<sup>8</sup> Not surprisingly, one of the most commonly held

<sup>7</sup>David Zarefsky, "Criteria for Evaluating Non-Policy Argument," *Perspectives on Non-Policy Argument*, Don Brownlee ed. (Cross Examination Debate Association, 1980), p. 10.

<sup>8</sup>Howe, pp. 1-3; Brownlee, p. 94; Ronald Lee, Karen King Lee, and

beliefs about CEDA is that it promotes a more communicative debate interaction. This belief reinforces the CEDA philosophy that the job of the debaters is to communicate to expert or lay audience in a manner conducive to audience consumption of the message. Meeting this objective requires that debaters exhibit clarity in their speaking styles. Two problems, organization and rate of delivery, can compromise clarity.

In an audience-centered activity, such as CEDA debate, it is important that our debaters understand the importance of presenting their arguments within a clear organizational structure. Not only do order and systematic arrangement facilitate comprehension,<sup>9</sup> lack of order can render the entire debate frustrating and, ultimately, unproductive. Affirmative speeches with no discernable structure, signposts, transitions, or argument heading all decrease the organizational clarity of the debate. Negative speeches that mislabel affirmative arguments, rearrange the affirmative structure, or are void of appropriate signposts and transitions also decrease organizational clarity, and, thus, the quality of the debate. As an improperly organized debate progresses, the usefulness of the debate interaction decreases sharply.

Speaking rate is certainly an important component of a clear speaking style. I am certain some of our debaters are not immune to indulging in the excesses of speed. Perhaps a more important problem than rate of delivery *per se* is that some debaters lose *clarity* as they accelerate their speaking rate. Compounding this problem are those that speak *unclearly* at an excessive rate when neither the *quantity* or *quality* of their arguments demands a rapid rate of delivery. The blindingly fast, unclear, five-minute first affirmative best illustrates this problem. Speeches such as these sacrifice clarity of communication in favor of employing "faddish debate style." I do not believe we should automatically chastize debaters who speak rapidly. Rather, we should encourage and reward clear communicative styles as we discourage unclear ones. Our debaters must remember their goal is not imitation; it is communication with the audience.

---

Matthew Seeger, "Comparison of CEDA and NDT: Differences in Program Characteristics and Director Attitudes," *Argument in Transition: Proceeding of the Third Summer Conference on Argumentation*, ed. by David Zarefsky, Malcolm O. Sillars, and Jack Rhodes (Annandale, Va.: Speech Communication Association, 1983), p. 846 point out that the growth in CEDA has come largely at the expense of NDT programs.

<sup>9</sup>Wayne Minnick, *Public Speaking*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1983), p. 32.

### Strengthening Analysis and Reasoning

The philosophy of CEDA debate stated at the beginning of this paper acknowledges the importance of analysis and reasoning in the conduct of our activity. Very simply, CEDA recognizes that careful, systematic, analysis and reasoning blend with evidence to form the persuasive weapons of the debater's arsenal. Deficiencies in analysis and reasoning decrease the quality of debate and represent a disregard for responsible advocacy. Three specific deficiencies seem to be symptomatic of analysis problems.

First, CEDA debaters sometimes fail to select arguments properly. Caught amidst the proliferation of arguments, both real and potential, that can be utilized in any given debate, our debaters sometimes neglect to select carefully and precisely those arguments which have a *direct* and *immediate* effect on resolution of the debate. Relevancy of argument often is sacrificed by advancing the perfunctory "three lines of analysis" regardless of the real import of those "three lines." While I suspect that there are multiple causes of this problem including failure to listen closely to the opposition's argument, manifestations of the problem are apparent in a number of instances including situations where debaters argue conceded claims, present counter-claims which have been preempted by previous analysis, present claims which can be accepted but have no real effect on the debate even if they are granted, or create arguments for their opponents in order to present what would otherwise be an uncontested claim. The problem of argument selection is evident in a number of specific contexts; two of the most important are analysis of evidence and analysis of arguments carried through rebuttals. The concern with analysis of evidence here overlaps somewhat with the general concerns regarding the use of evidence already discussed. However, a principle point of concern also seems to be the debater's ability to select *meaningful* points of critical inquiry applicable to the evidence used by their opponents. Too many of our debaters seem content with relying on tests of recency and authority when clashing with evidence. While these two tests are certainly important ones, they are by no means the only relevant tests of evidence analysis available to our debaters. One wonders how much longer judges will be able to endure cross-examination periods laced with these standard questions: "Exactly who is Sam Smith?", and "When did you say that article was written?" The problem of selecting relevant arguments also becomes more apparent as the debate progresses. Many of our debaters make poor choices during late constructive and rebuttal speeches in terms of the importance of the arguments they choose

to contest. Of course, the inability to recognize crucial arguments as the debate evolves not only decreases the chance of success in a given debate round; it reduces the overall quality of the debate as well.

Argument selection is the first symptom of the problem—argument presentation is the second. Our debaters simply do a less than adequate job of articulating the arguments they do present. Truncated explanations of arguments, substituting labels such as: "argument one no propensity," as well as wordy, circular explanations seem to crop-up more than they should. The thrust of this point is that our debaters do not seem to understand a very basic rule of communicative analysis: it does not matter how good the analysis might be or how spectacular what one *intends* to say really is; if the analysis is not *communicated effectively* and precisely to the audience, the analysis makes no meaningful contribution to resolution of the controversy.

The third concern is that many of our debaters do not attempt to maximize the impact of their analysis. Certainly, argument selection and articulation are precursors of this goal. The ultimate effect of any argument, however, rests on the debater's ability to explain the impact the analysis has on the debate in progress. Judges are sometimes left with the unanswered question of what an argument really means as illustrated in the situation where a debater claims that: "My opponent's definition comes from a law dictionary and this is not a 'legal' topic." Although the debater's claim may be true, the debater has not maximized the analysis because he has failed to explain the importance of field-related definitions. Thus, the judge may be left wondering, justifiably, "So what?" It seems that our debaters frequently assume judges will fill in blank spaces in order to draw the most meaningful conclusion possible for the analysis. When judges do not do this for debaters, the debaters become somewhat perplexed. After all, the debater said, "It is a legal definition—I did say that—then how could the judge vote against me?" The answer is simple: the debater neglected to *explain* the *ultimate implication* of utilizing a legal source for a definition on a topic not centered in the area of law. In short, the debater did not develop the ultimate impact of his analysis.

Debaters also fail to maximize the effectiveness of their arguments by neglecting to extend their analysis beyond its original dimension. While there is a time and a place for repetition, our debaters need to be aware of the fact that simply repeating an argument does nothing to *advance* that argument if it has been challenged. Rebuttal periods become very tiresome when our debaters simply restate their original arguments as if their

opponents said nothing about them at all! Our debaters need to be more conscious of the need to rephrase and replenish the important arguments on the basis of claims or challenges levied against them. To do so would not only make CEDA debates more competitive and interesting but would also markedly improve their quality.

Use of reasoning by CEDA debaters is an equally important concern. Many CEDA debaters do not utilize principles of sound reasoning, nor do they demonstrate an understanding of criteria applicable to testing various types of reasoning such as example, analogy, or causal inference. As a result, arguments are allowed to evolve on the basis of faulty premises, questionable conclusions and dubious probability.

I am certain we have all witnessed debates comprised of example and counter-example with little or no effort being made to explain why either the examples or counter-examples were more credible. Similarly, as judges, we feel a bit of sympathy for debaters who are relegated to simply claiming: "You can't accept my opponents' argument—they didn't have any evidence; they only said this idea was like something else." Certainly a debater better versed in tests of reasoning by analogy could have made a more telling, specific, and substantive indictment. Reasoning from causal inference also seems to become convoluted in some of our debates when necessary conditions are substituted for sufficient conditions in causal connections and no challenge is made.

While I am not suggesting that our debaters be expected to categorize and explain all the tests of reasoning contained in our debate textbooks, philosophy, and logic courses, it does seem instrumental that our debaters should attempt to understand and be able to apply fundamental principles of reasoning.

Before I conclude the first major portion of this paper, allow me to make one final point—call it an "underview" if you desire. I have summarized many problems which exist in CEDA debate. While the list of problems is long, I do not suggest for a moment that CEDA debate is substandard—only that it could be better. Many things are right about CEDA debate. We must be aware of our problems, however, in order to alleviate them, and improve the quality of our debates.

## SECTION TWO: POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

In this section I will offer some suggestions for dealing with the problems explained in section one. Many of the solutions to the problems I have cited are apparent once one understands the nature of the problem itself. I make no claim that these suggestions will solve all of the problems, only that some may want to consider

their feasibility. Furthermore, I do not claim that all of these suggestions are "new" or "novel." My overriding concern is to articulate as much about the role of the coach in improving the quality of CEDA debate as possible. In the final analysis, the suggestions I make are intended only to serve as a springboard for re-examination, evaluation, and implementation as deemed compatible with our individual coaching styles.

#### Problem Area: Using and Misusing Evidence

The problems regarding the use and misuse of evidence can best be dealt with by first recognizing that the proper use of evidence presupposes that evidence must first be accumulated through a systematic and rigorous research process. To that end, it seems appropriate to first make certain that our students understand the fundamental aspects of thorough and accurate research. Spending time discussing and demonstrating how to research and all the various questions, problems, and special circumstances researching any issue entails would be time well spent for both the student and coach. For the student, an indispensable skill would be learned which could help him/her in all other academic endeavors. For the coach some comfort could be taken from the realization that he/she has helped fill what is for many students an academic void. The use of library tours, research assignments and drills, and carefully monitored individual research sessions could help make certain that our students understand how to find material, how to read and synthesize material, how to evaluate its strengths and weaknesses, and how to properly record it.

Developing an expanded focus on evidence analysis also seems to be a necessary component of understanding the complete process of research. The thorough discussion of tests of evidence, ways to discover weaknesses in evidence, simple statistical analysis, and how to *communicate* one's analysis of evidence to an audience are important areas of focus. Each debater's understanding of these areas could be ascertained and even enhanced by utilizing two-person cross-examination drills focused squarely on evidence analysis and by using three-minute speaking drills that force our debaters to critique 3-5 pieces of evidence offered as support for a claim. Using squad sessions to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of evidence might also serve as an appropriate forum for addressing these issues.

Increasing the debater's understanding and awareness of the evidence he/she has accumulated is also an important step toward effectively using that evidence. Expanding our focus to make certain our students know how to use the evidence they have, how

to explain what their evidence does and does not say, and how to effectively *communicate* the meaning of their evidence to an audience are all issues that might be addressed. Careful scrutiny of how evidence is introduced in first affirmative speeches and on prepared briefs would be an important way of ensuring that evidence is being introduced properly. Paraphrase drills which require our debaters to make a claim, support the claim with evidence, then explain what the evidence means and why it supports the claim could ensure that our debaters are familiar with their evidence and understand how that evidence applies. A three-speech sequence that begins with the paraphrase drill, is followed by a short speech attacking the evidence and the evidence-claim relationship, and then by a short speech to answer the indictments could be a useful way of culminating our students' understanding - of the intricacies of evidence use and analysis.

Making certain our debaters understand the ethical responsibilities in gathering and using evidence is also an important area of consideration. Our debaters need to know how to determine if material is being taken out of context, how to avoid committing context-related errors in their research, and when and how to properly introduce evidence challenges into a debate. Providing and discussing examples of evidence taken out of context, tracing original sources on squad evidence already accumulated, and discussing what to do in the event one suspects "bad" evidence is being used could be useful ways of ensuring that our debaters understand the important ethical responsibilities involved in using evidence. Establishing a squad policy of accountability that both requires each debater to initial evidence he/she researched and turned in to the squad pool, and strictly monitored and controlled "evidence trades," could also be helpful in ensuring a high degree of ethical accountability on our squads.

Finally, coaches should re-evaluate the use of purchased pre-packaged evidence. If, indeed, debaters have problems researching, explaining, and knowing how to use evidence, we may need to make sure that our debaters do not come to rely on "research-through-the-mail" for the bulk of their research effort. If we decide to allow our debaters to have access to this material, we should make certain they understand the evidence, can explain what it means, can defend the evidence, and are held accountable for the accuracy in recording of the evidence.

#### Problem Area: Using and Misusing Debate Theory

Getting our debaters to grasp the complexities of debate theory may be the most difficult task we as coaches encounter. Although

the development of theoretical perspectives for CEDA debate is in its infancy, we need to attempt to make certain that our debaters have a basic understanding of concepts such as presumption, justification, and value objections. Furthermore, we need to encourage our students to attempt to utilize those concepts in a meaningful way during each and every debate round. It is not expecting too much of our debaters to require them to articulate clearly the theoretical position they *are* using, explain the relevance of the theoretical position in the debate, and explain why the theoretical position is not being met by their opposition.

One way to help ensure that our debaters are as well versed in debate theory as possible is to require our debaters to read the available literature on the subject. Obtaining and distributing copies of *The CEDA Yearbook* series would prove to be an invaluable aid in this endeavor. We might also attempt to supplement the readings done by our debaters with squad sessions devoted exclusively to debater-coach interaction of these positions. The emphasis of such interactions should be to allow the debaters to articulate the positions they have read, and discuss weaknesses, strengths, and alternate explanations of theory arguments. We should monitor *but not dominate* these discussions.

The use of one-point speeches designed to require our debaters to explain and support a particular interpretation of a theoretical position may serve as an important forum to ascertain how well our debaters actually understand CEDA theory. Adding cross-examination periods to these speeches could also prove to be an indicator of our debaters' ability to entertain rigorous scrutiny of their understanding. I believe that a series of drills such as the ones described here could also help instill a level of confidence in every debater regarding his/her ability to argue debate theory.

Above all, I feel, we need to emphasize the notion to our debaters that they have the ultimate responsibility to present theoretical issues in a *meaningful* fashion which includes not only a clear explanation of the theoretical position but application of that position as well.

#### Problem Area: Developing A Communicative Delivery

The concern that CEDA debaters develop clear oral presentational styles incorporating clear delivery and organization can and should be rigorously addressed. In my estimation, the best way to ensure that our debaters develop a sound understanding for communicator clarity can be achieved by completion of a basic Public Speaking course. I make this claim because in most courses of this type our debaters would be forced to deal with varied speech

topics, be instructed in the procedures of outlining, utilizing signposts and developing transitions, and be forced to be communicative with lay audiences.

Practice sessions within the squad context, with critiques, can also be useful in terms of helping our debaters develop an appropriate communicative style for the more specialized audiences they are likely to encounter in tournament competition. Critiques can be devoted heavily to the organizational clarity of the speeches and the debaters' ability to communicate their thoughts effectively. Tape-recording and even video-taping can also provide useful contexts for self-analysis by debaters. Of course, we must attempt to monitor and discuss the results of these tapings with our debaters.

Sound organization and clear presentation presupposes adequate flowing skills. The concern with flowing might best be handled through strategies designed to force debaters to practice this skill. As a prerequisite to practice, however, we must provide our students with a clear explanation of possible flowing techniques including: developing abbreviations for both general debate terms and topic-specific jargon, understanding ways to distinguish between "case" and "off-case" arguments, and demonstrating how to handle dropped arguments, how to record evidence, and how to coordinate flowing efforts with colleagues. Of course, we should closely monitor the end product of our debaters' efforts, particularly in practice debates where, I feel, all squad members should be required to flow. Sessions devoted to flowing taped debates would also provide a useful forum for practice. We might also want to inspect flows from tournament rounds in order to help isolate consistent weaknesses our debaters are having. I also feel that we must assume the responsibility to make certain *our* flows can serve as useful models for our squad members.

#### Problem Area: Strengthening Analysis and Reasoning

Teaching our debaters to utilize sound analysis and reasoning is by no means an easy task. The problem of being able to generate and extend strong analysis may be particularly difficult to cope with since the development of acceptable analysis is inherently "round-specific." That is to say, developing and extending relevant, meaningful, analysis must proceed largely from the context of arguments and responses raised in each individual debate. Nevertheless, there seem to be several approaches we can take to facilitate our debaters' ability to generate and utilize appropriate analysis.

Enhancing our debaters' understanding of the historical and contemporary background and issues of a given topic may prove to be a useful first step in improving the analysis used in CEDA debates. It seems reasonable to suggest that generation of analysis for a particular topic might be facilitated if our debaters understand as much background information about that topic as possible simply because background information provides a frame of reference for our debaters to understand what expert and lay persons involved with the topic area see as crucial and non-crucial issues and options. Making certain that our debaters do their homework—that they take time to become acquainted with general sources of information available on our debate topics—could, therefore, be an important element in helping to upgrade the analysis they produce. We can utilize squad meetings to foster discussions regarding the development of issues surrounding a particular topic.

Once our debaters seem to have a firm grasp of the general background information available on our debate topics, we can begin the process of developing specific analysis to be used in tournament debates. I believe that we must attempt to generate and test specific analysis on two levels. First, we must attempt to utilize the forum of squad discussions to probe and test the strength of particular case approaches and negative positions; second, we must attempt to refine points of view generated in squad discussions on an individual basis with each of our teams. Following this approach not only helps us produce multiple points of view on the intricacies of a given topic, but also enables each team to develop positions *they* understand and will feel comfortable in defending. The use of practice debates can provide a meaningful forum for further testing of individually tailored positions.

Next, we may want to consider developing exercises designed to enhance our debaters' ability to generate and utilize analysis spontaneously. One exercise that could prove quite useful in this regard is, again, the one-point speech. As coaches, we may want to require our debaters to focus their attention on single claims and use this focus to emphasize the development of clear and precise wording and explanation of that claim followed by a clear and accurate explanation of the importance of the claim itself. We could, of course, use a three-speech format (claim—attack of claim—rebuilding of claim) to further enhance application of the important principles of analysis.

Repeating speeches from past tournaments might also be a useful way of helping debaters sharpen their analyses for future competition. In such speeches, the debater would re-enact his/her

speech (INC, 2AC, 1NR, 1AR, 2NR or 2AR) in an effort to generate stronger positions than he/she utilized in the tournament debate. Critiques of these speeches by our squad as well as by us could help each debater understand how to more clearly state his/her position, how to select the most relevant arguments to advance and how to establish a context designed to maximize the strength of those arguments.

Another useful exercise might be to incorporate "explanation/cross-x drills." After presenting a response to a number of arguments, we could impose cross-examination periods designed to test the debater's understanding of the arguments he/she advanced and to require the debater to develop clear multiple-level explanations of what relevance and importance those arguments have.

Using rebuttal speeches without evidence might also help our debaters develop the ability to generate original analysis. Too often, I suspect, problems in analysis can be traced to either over-reliance on or lack of understanding of evidence. Forcing our debaters to respond to evidenced arguments without using evidence themselves would create a situation where the debater has to generate original thought, is forced to assume responsibility for clearly articulating that thought, and is required to carry that thought to its point of maximum effectiveness.

Finally, an important way of sharpening our debaters' analytical skills might be to conduct squad review and discussions of positions (both affirmative and negative) advanced by opposing teams. Certainly, each individual debate team will offer new insights into facets of any given topic. Discussions of these "new revelations" may help our debaters begin the process of developing suitable and meaningful responses to them. An interesting variation of this exercise might be to develop unique or unusual positions and force our debaters to respond to those positions in squad sessions.

Regardless of the exercises we attempt to use to help our students generate and apply more appropriate analysis, we must continually stress the importance of word economy and precise application of analysis, and establishing a clear context from which the potency of the analysis can be understood. We should not hesitate to stop our debaters during practice speeches and force them to clarify their arguments or better explain the importance of their analysis.

Dealing with problems related to reasoning might proceed in much the same manner as problems related to analysis. First, and foremost, our debaters must have a clear understanding of what constitutes acceptable patterns of reasoning as opposed to unacceptable ones. We should discuss the implications of reasoning

by example, analogy and causal inference with our debaters in order to determine how much they actually know about the potential questions that can be asked of each type of reasoning pattern. Similarly, we may even want to develop and utilize diagnostic tests designed to help in this endeavor. Fallacies may also be treated in this manner.

Once we determine the level of knowledge our debaters possess, we can direct them to appropriate readings on the subject. Although most argumentation and debate texts do not deal at substantial length with value analysis, they do offer, in varying degrees of thoroughness, explanations and tests of alternate patterns of reasoning.<sup>10</sup>

One useful exercise designed to strengthen the ability of our debaters to utilize strong reasoning might be the use of written critiques of transcribed debates. A number of such transcripts are readily accessible.<sup>11</sup> The written critiques our debaters produce should focus on the reasoning of all facets of the debate including the debaters' arguments, the reasoning implicit in the evidence used, and the reasoning implied in cross-examination questions. Discussing such written critiques would require our debaters to articulate the strengths and weaknesses they discovered and enable them to further explain their analysis of the reasoning.

A number of the exercises already mentioned including: practice debates, evaluation of flows from tournament rounds, evaluation of taped debates, and one-point speeches with cross-examination could also be utilized to enhance the ability of our debaters to apply their understanding of the process of reasoning.

In summary, I have identified four problem areas which seem to exist among some CEDA debaters and have mentioned ways we as coaches might respond to those deficiencies. Regardless of the thoroughness with which we pursue these options or any options designed to upgrade the quality of CEDA debate, we must recognize the importance of awareness as a necessary first step in eliminating perceived deficiencies. Not only must we be aware of our debaters' shortcomings, but we must make the debaters aware of their

---

<sup>10</sup>Some useful textbooks include: Austin J. Freeley, *Argumentation and Debate* (Wadsworth Publishing, 1981), pp. 110-36; J. Vernon Jensen, *Argumentation: Reasoning in Communication* (D. Van Nostrand Company, 1981), pp. 139-58; George W. Ziegelmüller and Charles Dause, *Argumentation: Inquiry and Advocacy* (Prentice-Hall, 1975), pp. 95-128; and J. W. Patterson and David Zarefsky, *Contemporary Debate*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1983), pp. 42-57.

<sup>11</sup>Transcripts of debates can be found in a variety of debate textbooks, as well as the summer issues of *Journal of the American Forensic Association*.

weaknesses as well. To that end, a third party becomes crucial—the judge. I believe debaters are strongly motivated by success. As a result, CEDA judges should attempt to reinforce our efforts by not hesitating to point out both the strengths and weaknesses of our debaters but by being careful, as far as possible, not to reward debate practices and styles incompatible with the philosophy of CEDA debate.

# Forensic Positions: A Glance at the "Want Ads"

MICHAEL W. SHELTON\*

*Webmaster's note: In order to get the figures to format correctly, the figures had to be created in another program and imported. As a result, some of the fonts and the look of the pie charts, are slightly different from the originals. However, the data on which the figures were created is exactly the same, and is included with the same number of decimal places, as it was in the original.*

It has often been said that any institution is only as good as the people who run it, and that axiom certainly seems relevant to the field of forensics. The director is responsible for the recruitment and coaching of students, the management of the budget, the scheduling of tournaments, and virtually all other functions of the forensic program. Faules, Rieke, and Rhodes have gone so far as to suggest that the "stability, nature, size, style, and success of the program rest with the director."<sup>1</sup> Little research has been completed regarding the characteristics of this pivotal figure. This study attempts to provide descriptive information about the expected qualifications and capabilities of forensic coaches and directors.

A director of forensics "must be, often simultaneously, coach, administrator, counselor, scholar, and teacher."<sup>2</sup> Obviously, a great deal might be expected of an individual seeking a position in forensics. In a discussion of forensic coaches as judges, Patterson and Zarefsky have stated that "you can assume they are familiar with argumentation and debate theory . . . and you can refer to theoretical concepts in the debate."<sup>3</sup> Department chairs and search committees surely make additional assumptions regarding the characteristics, training, and so forth of those individuals being considered for a position in forensics.

Although the role of the forensic director is a vital one, there is scant information available regarding the expected qualifications and capabilities of individuals who wish to attain such positions. Cameron conducted a study concerning the backgrounds of forensic directors in 1964,<sup>4</sup> and Klopf and Rives reported the results of a national survey concerning the characteristics of high school and college forensic directors in 1965.<sup>5</sup> Both studies involved individuals

\**The National Forensic Journal*, IV (Fall 1986), pp. 123-133.

MICHAEL W. SHELTON is a doctoral candidate in Communication at the University of Kentucky, Lexington 40506.

<sup>1</sup>Don F. Faules, Richard D. Rieke, and Jack Rhodes, *Directing Forensics: Contest and Debate Speaking* (Denver, CO: Morton Publishing Co., 1976), p. 69.

<sup>2</sup>Faules, et al., p. 69.

<sup>3</sup>J. W. Patterson and David Zarefsky, *Contemporary Debate* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1983), p. 295.

<sup>4</sup>Donald J. Cameron, "Backgrounds of Forensic Directors," *Journal of the American Forensic Association*, 1 (1964), pp. 57-61.

<sup>5</sup>Donald Klopf and Stanley Rives, "Characteristics of High School and

already serving as forensic directors describing themselves, not what was expected of them, prior to appointment. The lack of such information complicates the task of preparing for a career in forensics as it leaves individuals without relevant guidance for their educational and professional preparation. It also complicates the task of establishing forensic positions for those departments without the benefit of prior experience to guide them. The availability of such information should facilitate better practitioner preparation and departmental personnel considerations.

#### *Procedure*

The objective of the present study was to obtain descriptive information regarding positions in forensics. The study involved the analysis of position listings appearing in *Spectra*, a publication of the Speech Communication Association. Most forensic programs are located in departments of Speech Communication. Cameron found that "the overwhelming majority" of participants in his 1964 study held "membership in Speech or Speech-Drama departments."<sup>6</sup> More recently, Sorenson noted that "the vast majority of debate and individual events activities are housed in the Department of Speech at our respective colleges and universities."<sup>7</sup> *Spectra* is the only SCA publication which contains listings for professional positions, and it is also the only publication sent to all SCA members.<sup>8</sup> It is, therefore, the most universal source for those seeking positions offered by Speech Communication departments. All forensic positions were included for study—listings for directors of forensics, debate coaches, individual events coaches, and assistants in each area. Each position listing was considered only once, although a number of listings appeared in multiple issues.

In order to focus upon the most recent data, twenty-nine issues of *Spectra* spanning a two-year, five-month period from January, 1982 through May, 1984 were selected for study. The position listings often include:

Position title and/or rank; temporary, continuing or tenure-track appointment; major duties; degrees and experience requirements or preferences; salary or range; starting date; application materials/references required; response deadline, name, full

---

College Forensic Directors," *Journal of the American Forensic Association*, 2 (1965), pp. 33-37.

<sup>6</sup>Cameron, p. 59.

<sup>7</sup>Kai A. Sorenson, "Forensics and the Department of Speech Communication: The Tie that Binds," *Forensic*, (Winter, 1983), p. 4.

<sup>8</sup>*Spectra* is published by the Speech Communication Association, 5105 Blacklick Road, Suite E, Annandale, VA 22003.

address for responses; equal opportunity/affirmative action statement.<sup>9</sup>

Not all listings contain all of the above information, nor was all such information considered relevant for study.

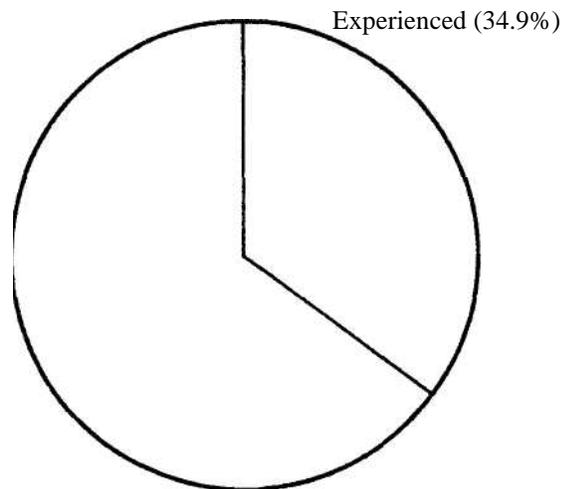
Each listing was analyzed in regard to degree and experience requirements, tenure possibility, position rank, and courses that the individual selected would be expected to teach. Totals were compiled for each category and appropriate percentage breakdowns were made. The results were also interpreted in order to consider the implications from the study and to focus upon areas for further investigation.

#### *Results*

A total of 106 listings were examined. Just over 65 percent of the listings did not specify a requirement of previous experience for applicant consideration. Nearly 35 percent listed previous experience as a necessary prerequisite for applicants. (See Figure 1) The results were substantially different in regard to degree preference. Fewer than 6 percent of the listings failed to specify a particular degree preference. Nearly 40 percent indicated that candidates

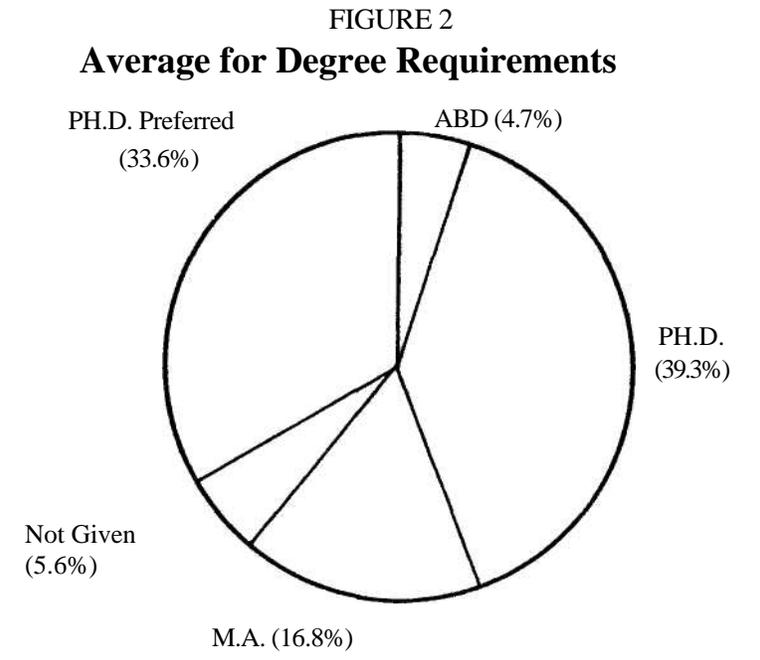
---

FIGURE 1  
Average for Experience Requirements  
Non-Experienced (65.1%)



<sup>9</sup>These are the items that the Speech Communication Association recommends for inclusion in position announcements.

would be required to hold the doctorate in order to be considered for the position listed. Another large percentage, 33.6 percent, indicated that the doctorate was the preferred degree, while 4.7 percent indicated that candidates should have completed all doctoral work except for the dissertation. Less than 17 percent of the listings indicated that a master's degree was sufficient to qualify candidates for consideration. (See Figure 2)



Over forty percent (40.6%) of the listings indicated that position appointment would be made at the rank of Assistant Professor, and another 7.5 percent indicated that appointment would occur at either the Associate or Assistant Professor level. Slightly more than 13 percent (13.2%) indicated appointment would be at the level of Instructor, while nearly 19 percent (18.9%) indicated that appointment would occur at either the Instructor or Assistant Professor level. Nearly 20 percent (19.8%) of the listings did not specify a particular level of appointment. (See Figure 3)

Nearly 45 percent of the listings did not specify whether the position was a tenure-track or term appointment. Just over 46 percent of the positions listed specified a tenure-track option, while 9.4 percent of the listing specified term appointments. (See Figure 4)

FIGURE 3  
Average for Positions Available

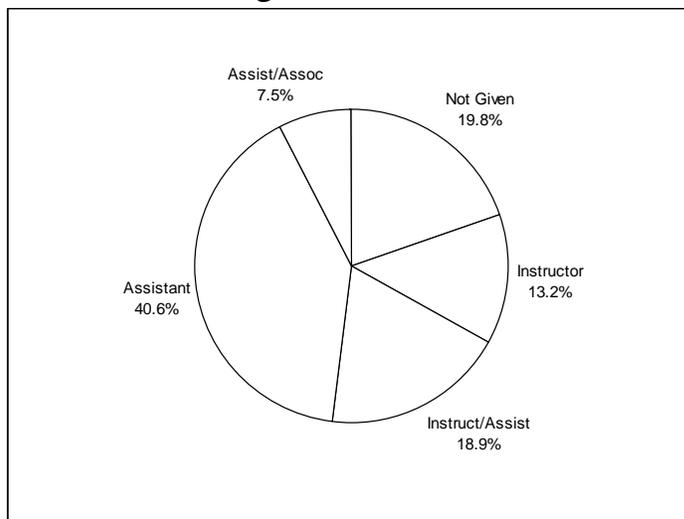
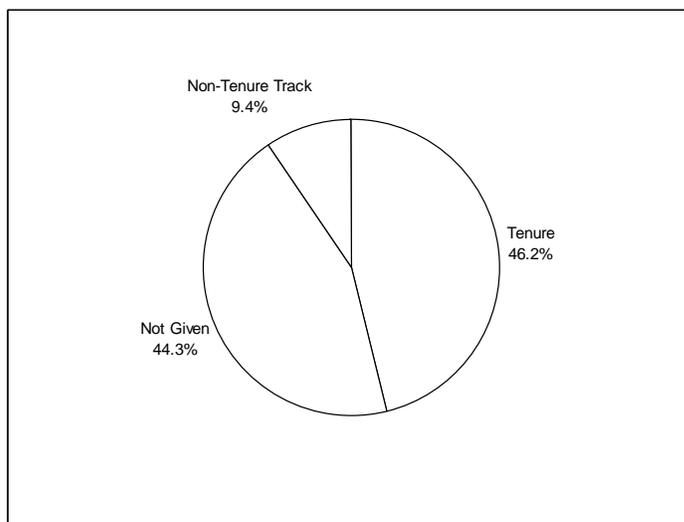
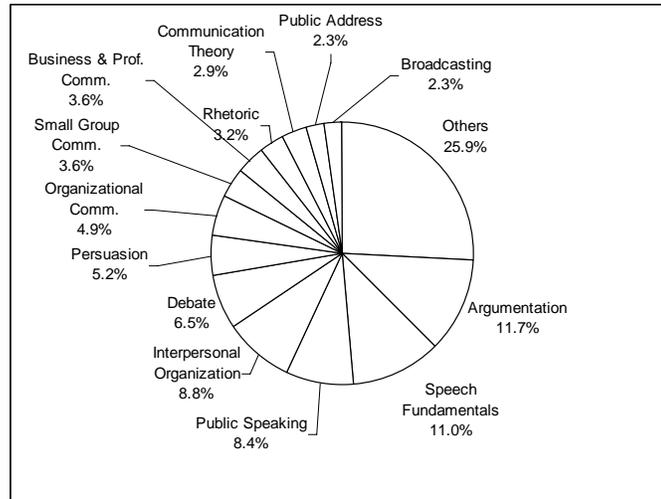


FIGURE 4  
Average for Tenure Positions Available



A total of 54 different courses were included as expected teaching requirements in the various listings. The two most frequently listed were argumentation and speech fundamentals, each appearing 36 times in the listings. Other frequently listed courses were: Public Speaking, Interpersonal/Organizational, Debate, Persuasion, Organizational Communication, Small Group Communication, Business and Professional Speaking, Rhetoric, Communication Theory, Public Address, and Broadcasting. (See Figure 5) A wide variety of other courses appeared in various listings. (See Table 1)

FIGURE 5  
Top Ten Classes Requested To Teach  
Including All Classes in 82-84



### Discussion

Most position listings place greater emphasis upon academic degree, the completed doctorate in particular, than upon previous experience. Such a finding has several implications. Colleges and universities are apparently more interested in attracting candidates with the doctorate than those who have previous teaching experience. It is, therefore, more important for individuals pursuing a career in forensics to finish their formal education than it is to obtain teaching and coaching experience. This indicates that individuals entering the forensic job market for the first time are

not at a competitive disadvantage if they have completed their doctorate. The implication for the individual who has only completed a masters is rather negative. There are relatively few forensic positions available for the individual who has not studied beyond the master's level.

The doctorate has apparently become more important than it was at the time of the self-reporting studies conducted by Cameron and Klopff and Rives. For example, Cameron found that only 44.9 percent of the directors included in his study held the doctorate.<sup>10</sup> The percentage of those holding the doctorate in the study reported by Klopff and Rives was even smaller, only 38 percent.<sup>11</sup> Currently, well over 70 percent of position listings included the doctorate as a requirement or preferred degree for candidates. This change may well reflect changes in the whole of education—emphasis on higher degrees, concern for retention possibilities, and so forth. Regardless of the cause for this emphasis, the individual interested in pursuing a career in forensics is well advised to seek and complete the doctorate.

The most common level of appointment is that of Assistant Professor. Nearly 65 percent of the position listings indicated that the rank of assistant professor was a possibility for candidates. This may very well be related to the preference for candidates holding the doctorate, as most institutions would not make appointments to that level for individuals who have not completed the doctorate. Once again, this would stress the importance of pursuing the doctorate.

Current appointment levels are relatively consistent with Cameron's findings save for the fact that a much larger percentage of respondents held the rank of Associate or Full Professor, over 40 percent.<sup>12</sup> The number of respondents in the Cameron study holding higher academic ranks can probably be accounted for by the fact that it was a study of individuals already holding forensic positions, not of those seeking appointment for the first time. Cameron also found that 31.4 percent of his respondents held the rank of Assistant Professor and another 21.2 percent held the rank of Instructor.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, it would appear that the rank that an individual can hope to attain while holding a position in forensics has not changed significantly in the last 20 years except that initial appointment may be at a higher rank.

Nearly half of the position listings indicated that a tenure-track

<sup>10</sup>Cameron, p. 60.

<sup>11</sup>Klopff and Rives, p. 34.

<sup>12</sup>Cameron, p. 59.

<sup>13</sup>p. 59.

Table 1

THE CLASSES REQUESTED FROM JANUARY 1982 TO MAY 1984		
RANKINGS	CLASSES	NO. OF TIMES REQUESTED
1	Argumentation	36
1[Tied]	Speech Fundamentals [Introd.]	36
2	Public Speaking	26
3	Interpersonal Organization	24
4	Debate	20
5	Persuasion	16
6	Organizational Communication	15
7	Small Group Communication	11
7 [Tied]	Business & Professional Speaking	11
8	Rhetoric	10
9	Communication Theory	9
10	Public Address	7
10 [Tied]	Broadcasting	7
[Others]	Mass Media	6
	Advanced Speech	4
	Group Discussion	4
	Voice & Diction	4
	General Education Communication	3
	Mass Communication	3
	Public Relations	3
	Secondary Education Methods	2
	Political Communication	2
	Voice For The Theatre	2
	Oral Interpretation	2
	Group Process	2
	Introduction to Human Comm.	1
	Psychology of Speaking	1
	Theatre	1
	Journalism	1
	Telecommunication	1
	Instructional Communication	1
	Preparation of Briefs	1
	Cross Cultural	1
	Discussion	1
	Non-Verbal Communication	1
	Diction	1
	Language Behavior	1

RANKINGS	CLASSES	NO. OF TIMES REQUESTED
	Theatre Production	1
	Creative Drama	1
	Media Research	1
	Research Methods	1
	Radio Programming	1
	Public Communication	1
	Parliamentary Procedure	1
	Speech Composition	1
	Interviewing	1
	Articulation & Non- Rhetorical Criticism	1
	Experimental Design	1
	Classroom	1
	Corporation	1
	Advertising	1
	Intercultural Communication	1
80	Subtotal of Other Classes Requested	
203	Subtotal of the Top Ten Classes Requested	
A total of 54 Different Classes Requested		
Source: Spectra — January 1982 to May 1984.		

option would be available for the selected applicant. This also probably related to the degree preferences. The possibility of tenure would surely help attract better qualified candidates, such as those who have completed the doctorate. The relationship would work the other way as well in that most institutions probably will not grant tenure to candidates who have not completed the doctorate. Such a finding has implications for both the individual interested in a career in forensics and those institutions that wish to attract such individuals. For individuals interested in pursuing a career in forensics, this finding would again stress the importance of the doctoral degree as it would help them attain a tenure-track position. For institutions seeking to attract such candidates, this would suggest that the possibility of tenure could work effectively to attract superior candidates.

The findings regarding the courses that applicants would be expected to teach are significant. The two most common courses are argumentation and speech fundamentals. This would suggest that any individual preparing for a career in forensics should, at a minimum, be capable of teaching argumentation and speech fundamentals. It would probably be fair to assume that individuals interested in a forensic position would be adequately prepared to teach these courses by virtue of their basic training in argumentation and speech communication.

Klopf and Rives found that 57 percent of their respondents taught argumentation and debate and that 45 percent taught fundamentals.<sup>14</sup> Apparently, these two courses have endured as assignments for those holding forensic positions. Klopf and Rives did not provide a comprehensive or exhaustive list of all courses taught by those holding forensic positions, so it would be difficult to make other comparisons between the respective findings.

Of particular interest is the finding that preferred candidates are more likely to possess a doctorate than earlier forensic directors, but they are very frequently required to teach the basic course. The increase in educational requirements is not providing an equivalent increase in the opportunity to teach upper division classes. Although the present study does not attempt to explain why such assignments occur, a number of possible explanations can be suggested. First, there may be an increased emphasis on the doctorate as a department-wide minimum requirement. Secondly, the forensic candidate may simply be overqualified for the assigned teaching area. If this is the case, it may well contribute to later dissatisfaction with the position. Another possible explanation may be a perception by the department that the demands of the forensic position make it necessary to restrict the director to such courses for preparation and other time factors. Finally, the assignment may be the result of sheer availability. The department probably offers more sections of the basic course than other classes; it is an available course, easily assigned to the forensic director.

The appearance of 54 different course titles in the position listings is significant in a number of ways. For example, it indicates that it would be very difficult to establish a normative model of forensic positions in regard to teaching assignments. The variety of courses is enormous. It ranges from theatre to journalism and from oral interpretation to broadcasting. Therefore, it would appear that individuals interested in a career in forensics may be well advised to develop a broad, generalist background. Communi-

---

<sup>14</sup>Klopf and Rives, p. 34.

cation generalists would find that they are qualified for a relatively large number of positions. This information would also suggest, however, that individuals with a specialty in any area of communication are likely to find a position that would allow them to teach in that area of speciality.

In summary, the average forensic position listing is seeking a candidate who has completed the doctorate, who could be appointed to the rank of Assistant Professor, who would be eligible for a tenure-track option, and could teach Argumentation and Speech Fundamentals. The individual interested in seeking a position in forensics would be well advised to attain a doctoral degree and be prepared to teach Argumentation and Speech Fundamentals. Institutions seeking such candidates would be well advised to offer the inducements of a tenure-track option and appointment to the rank of Assistant Professor.

There are areas that would warrant further research and investigation. Most obvious would be to conduct a descriptive study of the Cameron and Klopff and Rives type. Such a study would provide information regarding individuals already holding forensic positions and may well shed some light on the reasons why contemporary position listings emphasize those factors that they do.

Another area ripe for study would be an investigation of the reasons why departments emphasize the qualifications and capabilities that they do. Have the various course requirements, for example, evolved out of specific needs or simply developed by chance? How do institutions view the role of the Director of Forensics? Why do some departments favor term appointments over tenure-track appointments? All of these questions and others could perhaps be answered by a study of Speech Communication departments and the rationale for casting the Director of Forensics in a particular role.

Finally, it may well be desirable to conduct a similar investigation of high school forensic positions. Such information would be valuable for those electing to pursue a career in high school forensics and for high schools interested in attracting such individuals.

# Judge Demographics and Criteria for Extemp and Impromptu at N.F.A. Nationals

EDWARD J. HARRIS, JR.\*

In every forensic competition, the judge is crucial not only to the competitive outcome but also to the educational experience of the competitors. Despite the importance of the judge in a forensic setting, as a community we have done relatively little to explicate the criteria for decision making or even determine the criteria which are operative for most judges in a given event. Indeed, individual events has done very little in terms of developing a bare profile of the attitudes, philosophies, or preferences of individual judges or groups of judges.

The purpose of this study is twofold. First, to determine the relative importance of decision-making criteria employed by judges in extemporaneous and impromptu speaking. Second, to develop a knowledge of general judge demographics for National Forensic Association National Tournament judges.

## *Methodology*

Surveys were gathered at the N.F.A. National Championship Tournament at Western Kentucky University in 1981. Based on N.F.A. judge assignment practices (judges are assigned to an event for the first three rounds of competition or for the fourth round of the tournament) surveys were enclosed in each judge ballot for rounds three and four of the tournament. In extemporaneous speaking, 99 surveys were returned from a pool of 126 potential judges for a 78.57% rate of return. In impromptu speaking, the rate of return was 75% or 114 respondents from a pool of 152 potential judges.

The extemporaneous speaking survey contained twenty-six items which respondents rated on a scale of one to five. (See Exhibit 1) A rating of one indicated the item was *not* important to evaluating the speech. By contrast, a rating of five indicated the item was very important in evaluating the speech. The impromptu speaking

---

\**The National Forensic Journal*, IV (Fall 1986), pp. 135-147.

EDWARD J. HARRIS, JR. is Director of Forensics and Chair in Communications and Theatre at Suffolk University, Boston 02114.

The author wishes to acknowledge Mr. Leslie Phillips of Lexington (MA) High School and Mr. Richard P. Kropp of Wang Laboratories (Burlington, MA) for their assistance in collecting and statistically analyzing the data employed in this study.

## EXHIBIT 1

If you have already filled out this questionnaire at this tournament, please return this blank form with your ballot. Thanks.

ROUND \_\_\_\_\_ SECTION \_\_\_\_\_ EXTEMP

Please indicate the importance you attach to each of the criteria below by rating them according to the following scale:

- 1 = not important in evaluating the speech
- 2 = slightly important in evaluating the speech
- 3 = only moderately important in evaluating the speech
- 4 = rather important in evaluating the speech
- 5 = very important in evaluating the speech; one of the first things I look for

Please rate all items.

11	410	The speaker's language should be concise and accurate.
5	430	The speaker should avoid broad generalizations. His/her language should be as concrete and specific as possible.
14	375	The speaker should use evidence to support his/her statements.
21	331	The speaker's approach to the question should be creative.
17	363	The speech should have an introduction which contains a strong attention device.
3	434	The speech should have an introduction which contains a strong attention device.
12	408	The organization of the speech should be explicitly previewed.
2	453	The speech should have strong, clearly defined internal organization or substructure.
24	243	The speech should be entertaining.
4	433	Evidence should be used for all important points
10	413	Sources for evidence should be given (i.e., "Time magazine, February 23. . .")
23	300	The speaker's gestures should be effective.
19	356	The speaker should use his/her voice effectively, with adequate variation of pitch, pace and volume.
22	323	The speaker should be fluent, without pausing or stumbling over words.
13	407	The speech should not attempt to cover too much material in the time available.
6	426	The speech should only discuss matters which directly contribute to an answer to the question.

1	457	The speaker should answer the question directly.
9	418	The speaker should apportion his/her speaking time effectively.
25	231	The speaker should not rely on notes.
18	362	The speaker should have good eye contact.
8	425	The speaker should have an effective conclusion.
15	375	The speaker should not go more than ten or fifteen seconds overtime.
20	351	The speaker should state his question, word for word, within the speech.
26	152	The speaker should state his question, word for word, before beginning his speech.
16	370	The speech should be supported by evidence from a variety of sources.
7	426	The speech should be the product of original analysis, rather than a rehash of magazine articles.

## PERSONAL INFORMATION

How many years have you — been involved in competitive forensics? \_\_\_  
 participated as a contestant? \_\_\_\_\_  
 done active coaching? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you now an active college individual events coach?

What state are you from? \_\_\_\_\_

In what state did you receive your graduate training?

In what state did you receive your undergraduate training?

What is your highest earned degree? \_\_\_\_\_ In what field?

How many tournaments have you judged at in 1980-81? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you — particularly like to judge extemp -  
 can endure judging extemp \_\_\_\_\_  
 would rather not judge extemp \_

Do you consider yourself — a good judge of extemp  
 an adequate extemp judge \_\_\_\_\_  
 a not particularly good extemp judge

Is your team —very good at extemp \_\_\_ .  
 adequate at extemp \_\_\_\_\_  
 not very good at extemp

Thanks very much for your help.

Ed Harris  
 Suffolk University

---

## EXHIBIT 2

ROUND \_\_\_\_\_ SECTION IMPROMPTU

Please indicate the importance you attach to each of the criteria below by rating them according to the following scale:

- 1 = not important in evaluating the speech
- 2 = slightly important in evaluating the speech
- 3 = only moderately important in evaluating the speech
- 4 = rather important in evaluating the speech
- 5 = very important in evaluating the speech; one of the first things I look for

Please rate all items.

7	468	The speaker's language should be concise and accurate.
14	430	The speaker should avoid broad generalizations. His/her language should be as concrete and specific as possible.
5	477	The speaker should use appropriate examples to illustrate his/her statements.
4	482	The speaker should take a position on the topic.
9	453	The speaker's approach to the question should be creative.
22	337	The speaker should use examples and quotations from history and philosophy.
11	445	The speech should have an introduction which contains a strong attention device.
3	494	The speech should have an introduction which communicates the "thesis" of the speech.
12	442	The organization of the speech should be explicitly previewed.
1	518	The relation of the speech to the topic should be made clear; the judge should not have to draw inferences or do other work to discern the relationship.
24	269	The speech should be entertaining.
8	457	The relation of the speech to the topic should be stated explicitly early in the speech.
18	400	The speech should discuss only matters which are directly related to the topic.
6	474	The speech should not attempt to discuss too many ideas in the time available.
15	419	The speaker should be fluent, without pausing or stumbling over words.
20	388	The speaker's gestures should be effective.

13	438	The speaker should use his/her voice effectively, with adequate variation of pitch, rate, and volume.
2	499	The speaker should have an effective conclusion.
21	262	The speaker should not go more than a few seconds overtime.
16	411	The speaker should have good eye contact.
10	451	The speaker should state the topic, word for word, within the speech.
25	242	The speaker should not rely on notes.
19	391	The speaker should apportion his/her time effectively between preparation and speaking.
17	406	The speaker should apportion his/her speaking time effectively.
23	310	The speaker should offer his/her personal opinion on the truth of the topic.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

How many years have you — been involved in competitive forensics? \_  
 participated as a contestant? \_\_\_\_\_  
 done active coaching? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you now an active college individual events coach?

What state are you from? \_\_\_\_\_

In what state did you receive your graduate training?

In what state did you receive your undergraduate training?

What is your highest earned degree? \_\_\_\_\_ In what field?

How many tournaments have you judged at in 1980-81? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you — particularly like to judge impromptu \_\_\_\_\_  
 can endure judging impromptu \_\_\_\_\_  
 would rather not judge impromptu . \_\_\_\_\_

Do you consider yourself — a good judge of impromptu \_\_\_\_\_  
 an adequate judge of impromptu \_\_\_\_\_  
 a not particularly good judge of impromptu \_\_\_\_\_

Is your team —very good at impromptu \_  
 adequate at impromptu \_\_  
 not very good at impromptu

Thanks very much for your help.

Ed Harris  
 Suffolk University

survey contained twenty-five items rated on the same scale. (See Exhibit 2) Each survey also contained personal information questions including the number of years involved in forensic coaching, number of years as a contestant, the respondent's home state, the site of their undergraduate training, and the site of their graduate education. Questions also sought information about the academic degree status of judges and the field in which degrees were earned. Respondents were asked about the number of tournaments they attend each forensic season, their willingness to judge the event to which they were assigned, a self-appraisal of their ability to judge that event, and an appraisal of the respondent's team in terms of their performance in the event.

Each item in the survey was designed to indicate a judge's conception of importance for one to four major factors in judging an event: Content, Delivery, Organization, or Conventions of the Event. Items were developed by the author and were reviewed by three members of the Suffolk University forensic coaching staff. Items which were judged to be vague, redundant, or inappropriate were deleted. Despite this precaution, the included items reflect the bias of the author regarding the events in question. For example, in impromptu, a content item would be: "A speaker should use examples to illustrate statements," a delivery item would be: "The speaker's gestures should be effective," an organization item would be: "The organization of the speech should be explicitly previewed," a convention item would be: "The relation of the speech to the topic should be stated explicitly early in the speech."

Each team was scored by adding the total of the ratings assigned to it by respondents. Each item was then rank ordered and the average score per item was used to compile an index of the category rating. The assignment of a given item to a category (Content, Delivery, Organization, or Convention) was done by consensus of four independent scorers. A copy of the two survey instruments employed with total responses indicated are reproduced after the conclusion of the study.

### *Results*

The results are as follows. In impromptu speaking, the three highest rated items were: The relation of the speech to the topic should be made clear, the judges should not have to draw inferences or do other work to discern the relationship (rating 518); the speaker should have an effective conclusion (rating 499); and the speech should have an introduction which communicates the thesis of the speech (rating 494).

Based on our survey, the three lowest rated items were: the speaker should offer his/her personal opinion on the truth of the topic (rating 310); the speech should be entertaining (rating 269); and the speaker should not rely on notes (rating 242).

In extemporaneous speaking, the three highest rated items were: the speaker should answer the question directly (rating 457); the speech should have strong, clearly defined internal organization or substructure (rating 453); and the speech should have an introduction which communicates what the speech will do or contain (rating 434).

The three lowest rated items in the extemporaneous speaking survey were: the speech should be entertaining (rating 242); the speaker should not rely on notes (rating 231); and the speaker should state the question word for word before beginning the speech (rating 152).

Based on the ranking of items, the overall importance of categories in impromptu speaking was:

1. Organization
2. Delivery
3. Convention
4. Content

The category ratings for extemporaneous speaking were:

1. Organization
2. Content
3. Delivery
4. Convention

#### *Judge Demographics Results*

This study has also sought to make a preliminary effort to develop a judge profile for the typical forensic tournament judge. This study does not claim to actually develop a judge profile, rather it is a first step in the quest to gain greater insight into judge demographics. Clearly, the individual events community must begin to do the research to develop reliable judge profile data. If we are to avoid plastic, all-purpose presentations devoid of substantive content then we should give our students a means of adjusting their speeches to meet audience demands and expectations. If we are to reach an understanding of how to judge various events, we should discover the diversity of opinion on questions of judging criteria. If we are to train new forensic coaches, we should show them the breadth of opinion within our community and let them develop their own philosophies of forensics rather than relying on parochial habit and tradition. If we are to have an equitable national forensic competition, then we should have a means of insuring that all

competitors have first-hand information about all their potential judges.

In terms of judge experience, we found that 90.5% of the judges in impromptu speaking and 91.9% of those in extemporaneous speaking were active forensic coaches. Presumably the remainder were hired judges or non-coaches who accompanied competing schools. The average judge in extemporaneous speaking had judged in 10.25 regular season tournaments. Five per cent of the judges had been involved in 20 or more regular season tournaments, forty per cent were in 10 to 20 tournaments, thirty-four per cent were in five to 10 tournaments and twenty per cent judged in fewer than 5 tournaments. In impromptu speaking the figures are much the same. The average impromptu speaking judge had participated in 9.7 tournaments during the season. Of these judges, thirteen per cent had less than five tournaments, thirty-three per cent had five to 10 tournaments, fifty per cent had 10 to 20 tournaments, and four per cent had 20 or more tournaments of judging experience.

Judges' self-ratings reveal some interesting data. In impromptu speaking, sixty-four per cent of the judges like to judge that event. But twenty-eight per cent said they could only endure impromptu speaking and eight per cent didn't like judging the event. In extemporaneous speaking fifty-nine per cent like judging the event, but eleven per cent didn't like judging the event and thirty per cent can at best endure it. Despite this apparent displeasure with judge assignments, sixty-four per cent of the judges consider themselves good impromptu speaking judges and sixty-two per cent of the extemporaneous speaking respondents consider themselves good extemp judges. Thirty-seven per cent of each event pool considered themselves poor judges of the event to which they were assigned.

We also studied degree status among judges. In extemporaneous speaking, twenty-four per cent held a BA, fifty-nine per cent held an MA, and seventeen per cent held a Doctoral or post-Masters degree. The percentages in impromptu speaking were exactly the same. Eighty-five per cent of the extemp judges and eighty per cent of the impromptu judges held degrees in Speech/Communication.

#### *Judge Origins*

Judge origin data were also compiled in the survey. (See Tables 1 and 2) The Middle West dominated the judging pool at Western Kentucky University Nationals in 1981. That is not surprising, but the extent of the domination is noteworthy. Sixty-three per cent of the judges claim to be from the Mid-West. At least the judges claimed to be from states the author categorized as Mid-West. Many

TABLE 1

STATE	REGION	FROM	TRAINING	
			UNDERGRAD	GRAD
Alabama	S	4	1	2
Arizona	W	0	1	0
Arkansas	S	0	1	0
California	W	2	6	5
Colorado	W	1	1	0
Connecticut	NE	0	1	0
Florida	S	1	2	1
Georgia	S	1	1	0
Illinois	MW	8	6	10
Indiana	MW	3	7	6
Iowa	MW	2	0	3
Kentucky	S	8	5	8
Louisiana	S	0	0	2
Massachusetts	NE	0	2	0
Michigan	MW	14	12	16
Minnesota	MW	4	3	3
Mississippi	S	0	2	0
Missouri	MW	1	0	2
New Jersey	NE	1	0	1
New York	NE	2	3	1
North Carolina	S	3	0	1
North Dakota	W	1	1	1
Ohio	MW	22	14	26
Oklahoma	S	0	1	0
Pennsylvania	NE	3	7	2
Rhode Island	NE	1	0	0
South Dakota	W	0	1	0
Tennessee	S	2	2	1
Texas	S	4	3	4
Virginia	S	0	1	2
Washington	W	1	0	0
West Virginia	MW	5	7	5
Wisconsin	MW	3	6	5
Wyoming	W	1	0	0

of these states consider themselves Mid-East, a category not employed in this study. Fifty-seven percent of the judges received their undergraduate degrees in the Mid-West and 68 percent received their graduate training in that part of the country. Twenty-four percent of the judges at WKU Nationals were from the South. Twenty percent received their undergraduate training there and 22 percent received their graduate training in twelve Southern states. Seven percent of the judges are from the Northeast with 13

TABLE 2

IMPROMPTU SPEAKING — DEMOGRAPHICS				
STATE	REGION	TRAINING		
		FROM	UNDERGRAD	GRAD
Alabama	S	0	1	1
Arizona	W	0	0	1
Arkansas	S	0	1	0
California	W	9	10	8
Colorado	W	1	0	3
Connecticut	NE	2	2	0
Delaware	NE	0	0	2
Florida	S	2	2	0
Georgia	S	2	2	0
Illinois	MW	13	8	14
Indiana	MW	5	7	8
Iowa	MW	2	1	4
Kansas	MW	4	2	2
Kentucky	S	14	8	10
Louisiana	S	0	0	1
Maine	NE	1	1	0
Maryland	NE	0	0	1
Massachusetts	NE	4	5	2
Michigan	MW	12	15	15
Minnesota	MW	6	3	3
Mississippi	S	0	2	0
Missouri	MW	2	0	0
Montana	W	0	0	1
Nebraska	MW	3	0	2
New Jersey	NE	1	0	2
New Mexico	W	0	0	1
New York	NE	7	6	1
North Carolina	S	4	4	1
North Dakota	W	1	1	1
Ohio	MW	15	16	24
Oklahoma	S	1	1	1
Oregon	W	0	0	1
Pennsylvania	NE	8	8	2
Rhode Island	NE	1	0	0
South Carolina	S	0	1	1
South Dakota	W	0	1	0
Tennessee	S	2	3	2
Texas	S	0	6	8
Virginia	S	3	2	2
Washington	W	0	1	1
West Virginia	MW	3	3	2
Wisconsin	MW	3	8	3
Wyoming	W	0	0	1

percent receiving their undergraduate training in the region and four percent receiving their graduate training. Six to seven percent of the judges are from the Western states. The West provides undergraduate training to 10 percent of the judges and 6 percent of the graduate training.

### *Conclusions*

The demographic data reported here raises a number of questions for further research. First, the issue of judge assignment at national tournaments should be reevaluated. When 10% or more of the judges, at a national championship tournament, are judging events they don't like, then it seems appropriate to consider a different mechanism for judge assignment. One possible solution would be for judges to rank the events they prefer to judge rather than the current practice of listing those events they refuse to judge. A system of preference ranking would help insure that those judges who are eager to judge an event are able to do so for the maximum number of rounds possible under tournament management guidelines. By a relatively simple adjustment in tournament administration, it may be possible to significantly increase judge satisfaction with the competition. Since forensic competitions make the implicit assumption that contestants will be provided with the "best judging" available, an increase in judge satisfaction could yield competitive and educational benefits for contestants.

A second issue of concern is the enormous concentration of degree holders in speech serving as forensic judges. Other segments of the forensic community have been criticized because the judging requirements for a competition have become so restrictive that a person from the "real world" is unable to comprehend the activity. Many in NDT (National Debate Tournament) debate have argued that an open judging system would minimize undesirable behaviors in delivery and misuse of evidence. While individual events has not deteriorated in terms of delivery the concentration of speech communication specialists may over time produce other detrimental behavior. At the very least, such a concentration of speech specialists tends to isolate forensics in the academic community and may exclude or undermine support for the activity in non-academic circles. If we begin to feel that only speech professionals are qualified judges we may take a dangerous step toward insulting and isolating our activity. This certainly does not argue for allowing just anyone to judge at the national championships but given the number of forensic competitors drawn to the study of law it seems unusual that less than ten percent of the judges at a

competition would have law degrees. Clearly, research should be conducted to determine what if any unique outcomes are associated with speech trained judges as opposed to other potential judging groups for a forensic competition. Comparative data should also be sought to establish if the judge pool analyzed here is typical of other N.F.A. national competitions or even of local forensic tournaments.

A third area for investigation suggested by this data is the question of style versus substance in competitive forensics. If we assume that contestants will adapt their presentation to the expectations of the judge in a competition then the signal being sent by judges in this sample is clearly one where substance is of little concern. Charges of sophism usually produce a defensive attitude in forensic coaches. We claim to teach sound methods of developing, supporting, and organizing claims not just delivering them. Yet the data presented here seem to indicate that the basis for our competitive decisions are most likely to be based on organization and are more likely to be influenced by delivery than content. Perhaps these results are an aberration or perhaps a concern for style and structure does not undermine a concern for substance but it is also possible that in our desire to promote high quality presentational skills we are paying less attention to the quality of the arguments being offered in that presentation. It is also possible that despite a concern for the content of a message we are signaling to competitors through our comments and rankings a greater concern for delivery and organization. In any case, further research might focus on the substance versus style issue to determine where our priorities are being placed and what implications those priorities will have on forensic activity.

A fourth concern is the overwhelming dominance of Mid-Western judges at national competitions. If we assume that audience adaptation is a significant aspect of forensic competition then Mid-Western contestants may have a distinct advantage over contestants from other geographic regions. Research might focus on Mid-Western judges to determine if they mirror other judges in terms of decision making, philosophy etc. Perhaps the N.F.A. should consider some means of balancing these regional variations by encouraging hired judges from non-Mid-Western regions of the country.

A more controversial question in terms of this research is whether judges should be required to make public their preferences and expectations on various event conventions, stylistic practices, organizational schemes or content features. The National Debate Tournament has in recent years required judges to submit a

judging philosophy form which is distributed to contestants. Although the merits of this practice are hotly debated by members of the NDT community perhaps individual events should consider some alternative means of providing similar information. If we expect students to adapt their presentation to an audience then don't we have an obligation to give students more than anecdotal information regarding the expectations of that audience. Just the act of compelling the various philosophies of judges might indicate ways to improve forensic activity.

In summary, the need for research on judge demographics and judge philosophy is critical. So long as the outcome of our activity is linked to the decision of a person with a ballot, we should endeavor to understand how that person makes decisions, applies standards and imposes their expectations upon contestants.

# Review of Professional Resources

Millard F. Eiland, Editor

## INTRODUCTION TO DEBATE

edited by Carolyn Keefe,

Thomas B. Harte, and Lawrence E. Norton

New York, NY: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1982

The editors of *Introduction to Debate* provide a wealth of rewarding experience for the novice debater, matriculating law student, or director of forensics. This long overdue review reveals the quality of the contributors' experience in the field of speech communication. Pi Kappa Delta can be extremely proud of a product which was produced by so many outstanding members of its organization.

The 15 chapters in the text, comprise (a) historical information, (b) elements of debate—format and structure, and (c) key factors in the process of critical thinking. I must stress that each contribution presents a unique frame of reference for the studious reader to analyze or study. Another element of critical consideration by the authors is the strong basis for consistent recognition of format, procedures, standards of debate presentation, and methods of objective critique.

Norton in Chapters 1 and 2 opens with a clear historical as well as academic rationale for serious consideration by the reader. Special notice should be taken as it relates to the critical thinking skills which can be produced by participation in debate. After a clear analysis and classification of standard debate formats in Chapter 3 by Baird, Goodwin presents the process of analysis and research in Chapters 4 and 5. In these basic theoretical descriptions for the reader, one must become familiar in order to understand overall design of the text.

Harte approaches the use and evaluation of evidence in Chapters 6 and 7 in a very methodical manner. In fact, for the novice debater a serious understanding would structure any future consideration in the process. For the affirmative and negative presenters, these chapters clearly neutralize the ability to understand basic methods for evidence consideration. Derryberry in Chapters 8 and 9 continues with a clear discussion on the philosophical elements of reasoning; one important element here is the defined relationship in the debate process and theory.

Short deserves special consideration in Chapters 10 and 11 even by a matriculating law student as the actual affirmative/negative

case building process begins. The precise method of case structure aids in the basic understanding of planning the case as well as its defense. This is an invaluable section to the fundamental principles and rationale for the case. Beagle concludes the thought process as it relates to challenging the opposition in Chapter 12 by focusing on what is very important in the debate process—listening skills! Kleinan in Chapters 13 and 14 introduces judges to the key elements of consistent factors in the evaluation process. Major concern should be to develop a clear understanding for problems, responsibilities, and factors relevant to the debate process. The primary objective by Kleinan is to establish consistency among participants and practitioners. Chapter 15 finalizes the element of ethics and morality as considerations in the debate process. Keefe points to the "balance that can be obtained in the success or misunderstanding of self in the process. The process and product are viewed in this regard as key elements for the debater and the debate.

The appendix sections present a variety of examples of debating, tournament procedures, the debate brief, a practice classroom debate, and American Forensic Association standards. These are excellent sections for the incorporation of theory, process, and practice for the novice debater and study by the new coach.

The text is instructional for the beginning student, instructor, or coach and it provides a practical series of exercises after each chapter. The suggested readings introduce the reader to the rich variety which is provided through the experiences of the authors. Certainly, there is one area of concern that readers will encounter which might possibly raise some awareness to debate. That is the degree of academic and intellectual material for study which should provide a challenging element for the participant.

*Introduction to Debate* must be added to the required readings list of basic textbooks for Pi Kappa Delta members and student participants.

ROBERT M. GILMORE, SR.  
*Prairie View A & M University*