

## *COLLOQUIUM ON BALLOT CRITERIA:*

### **The Use of Criteria Referenced Ballots for Individual Events**

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In the forensics tournament setting, students receive feedback on their performances through ballots written by each of their judges. The benefits of this procedure include the opportunity for each competitor to have some twenty to thirty different forensics educators respond to their performances in a given year and offer them assistance in improving their oral communication skills. The opportunity for feedback is maximized when ballot forms focus critics' attention on criteria relevant to the event being judged and prompt judges to provide helpful suggestions. Despite the importance of the written ballot to forensics education, forensics educators have not studied ballot format. The proceedings of the 1984 National Developmental Conference on Forensics notes: "If one area of tournament direction has been ignored, it has been ballot construction. Quite often, the configuration of the ballot seems to match the paper available" (Murphy, 88). In order to improve ballots, the NDCF recommended a set of criteria for evaluation of speech (informative, persuasive, communication analysis, extemporaneous, impromptu, speech to entertain, etc.) and interpretation (prose, poetry, drama, duo, etc.) events. Murphy reports:

These standards of evaluation are intended to provide a framework of criticism.... [and] will allow students to understand what they are supposed to accomplish and learn. These standards reflect well established rhetorical principles which transcend the particular events. These standards should provide a framework for more coherent evaluation of student performances (90).

The criteria proposed by the individual events work group were endorsed by the NDCF and have been used by various tournaments, including the Pi Kappa Delta National Tournaments (see Hanson, 1985). There has been no study, however, of the effect of the criteria on comments written by judges, or even of the usefulness of the criteria themselves. In recent years, forensics educators have also discussed the merits of adding a "reason for decision" section to individual events ballots; proponents of such an addition argue that it would prompt

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judges to provide a rationale for the ranking and rating awarded to a competitor. This study is an initial investigation of some of the foregoing assumptions about ballot format. In particular, the research sought to learn:

Q1: Does articulation of criteria on a ballot affect the content of judges' comments to students?

Q2: Does a "reason for decision" space motivate judges to explain or justify their rankings and ratings?

Q3: Are each of the NDCF criteria used by judges or do some of them appear to be irrelevant or misunderstood?

Q4: Does use of ballot format vary among types of judges, events, divisions, or levels of rank and rate?

#### Method

Data were collected by using two-part NCR ballots for all preliminary individual event rounds at the first Northwest Forensics Conference Tournament of 1988-89.<sup>1</sup> Round one ballots listed no criteria, round two ballots used the criteria proposed by the 1984 National Developmental Conference, and round three ballots used these criteria plus a "reason for decision" space (see appendix for copies of the ballots used). Judges were given no special training before rounds began. The second copies of the ballots from the nine individual events were collected and content analyzed. In all, 1002 ballots were studied in this project.

Demographic information recorded for each ballot included round, event, judge (director of forensics, assistant, alumni of forensics competition, other),<sup>2</sup> division of the competitor, rank and rate. The total number of comments and the number of comments directed to each of the criteria, reason for decision, or "other" were counted. The unit of analysis was a complete thought unit, which ranged from one or two words (e.g., "good gestures") to a lengthy sentence or two. Finally, a judgment was made for round two and round three ballots as to whether the judge made no attempt to use the ballot format, made partial use of the format, or made a clear effort to use the printed format. Inter-coder reliability was 93%.<sup>3</sup> Cross-tabulation, breakdown, and chi-square analyses were conducted using SPSS.<sup>4</sup>

#### Results

Q1: Does articulation of criteria on a ballot affect the content of judges' comments to students?

Using a criterion-referenced ballot clearly affected judges' comments to students. As the first segment of Table 1 indicates, in the speech events the number of comments as well as judges' attention to thesis, link, support, organization, and language improved in rounds 2

and 3 when ballots with criteria were used. The greater focus on these factors did not negatively impact judge comments on speech delivery. The first segment of Table 2 contains the results for the interpretation events. While the total number of comments here did not increase significantly, use of the criteria referenced ballots did shift judge focus to factors other than delivery of the program.

**TABLE 1**  
**Crosstabulations for Speech Events**  
**(Mean Number of Comments)**

	Total	Thesis	Link	Support	Organ	Lang	Deliv	Other	RFD
Rd 1 (N = 228)	4.88	0.29	0.18	2.26	0.49	0.19	1.38	0.12	0.03
Rd2 (N = 229)	5.79	0.53	0.50	1.93	0.83	0.38	1.60	0.17	0.04
Rd3 (N = 229)	6.02	0.52	0.53	1.88	0.81	0.44	1.52	0.53	0.15
p=	.0000	.0000	.0000	.0068	.0000	.0000	.1919	.0000	.0000
DOF (n = 291)	6.31	0.48	0.46	2.51	0.86	0.40	1.62	0.23	0.12
Asst (N = 79)	4.53	0.29	0.35	1.73	0.48	0.08	1.28	0.44	0.03
Alum (N = 207)	5.11	0.39	0.38	1.70	0.63	0.32	1.39	0.31	0.06
Other (N=109)	5.18	0.57	0.35	1.58	0.63	0.39	1.53	0.20	0.01
p=	.0000	.0029	.2911	.0000	.0004	.0002	.0948	.0220	.0077
Ext (N = 248)	5.41	0.44	0.26	2.04	0.92	0.37	1.34	0.25	0.04
Info (N = 205)	5.99	0.47	0.56	1.87	0.64	0.39	1.94	0.25	0.14
Pers (N = 92)	5.00	0.33	0.41	1.93	0.38	0.12	1.51	0.47	0.01
ArgA (N = 99)	5.65	0.52	0.46	2.13	0.73	0.39	1.12	0.25	0.09
CA (N = 42)	5.43	0.48	0.36	2.64	0.50	0.26	1.12	0.12	0.02
p=	.0035	.2084	.0000	.0205	.0000	.0030	.0000	.0158	.0082
Ch (N = 220)	5.27	0.39	0.35	2.16	0.58	0.32	1.13	0.37	0.10
Int (N = 291)	5.66	0.40	0.41	2.06	0.75	0.32	1.52	0.22	0.07
nOV (n = 175)	5.76	0.59	0.46	1.81	0.81	0.38	1.91	0.23	0.03
P=	.0513	.0004	.2577	.0391	.0137	.4916	.0000	.0150	.1153

**TABLE 2**  
**Crosstabulations for Interpretation Events**  
**(Mean Number of Comments)**

	Total	Purpose	Link	Integrity	Theme	Delivery	Other	RFD
Rd 1 (N=140)	4.82	0.31	0.18	0.03	0.51	3.19	0.25	0.14
Rd 2 (N=140)	5.09	0.68	0.42	0.50	0.46	2.82	0.20	0.07
Rd 3 (N=136)	5.17	0.62	0.54	0.28	0.58	2.64	0.28	0.25
p=	.3605	.0000	.0000	.0000	.0000	.0003	.0000	.0002
DOF (N=104)	5.57	0.58	0.54	0.37	0.51	3.19	0.25	0.14
Asst (N=89)	4.31	0.45	0.18	0.13	0.48	2.64	0.37	0.15
Alum (N=113)	4.73	0.61	0.44	0.27	0.37	2.55	0.44	0.10
Other (N=110)	5.40	0.49	0.33	0.28	0.33	3.46	0.41	0.19
p=	.0000	.2362	.0000	.0053	.1065	.0001	.1126	.3171
Prose (N=115)	4.83	0.63	0.45	0.27	0.44	2.45	0.51	0.17
Duo (N=51)	5.08	0.29	0.25	0.16	0.31	3.61	0.29	0.18
POI (N=129)	5.12	0.61	0.35	0.23	0.49	3.04	0.33	0.12
Drama (N=121)	5.10	0.46	0.40	0.36	0.35	3.12	0.31	0.14
p=	.7023	.0030	.1232	.0509	.1865	.0004	.0319	.6856

Consistent with these results is the assessment of judges' use of the ballot format. In rounds 2 and 3, 28% of the speech ballots showed that judges wrote comments in response to the questions posed. An additional 12% of the ballots showed that judges made some effort to respond to the criteria by writing a short global response to the questions and then writing comments in their own format on the right-hand side of the ballot. Interpretation ballots displayed a similar pattern: 27% contained comments written directly to the criteria and an additional 19% showed a partial effort to use the ballot format.

Since judges who wrote 60% of the speech ballots and 54% of interpretation ballots did not put their comments into the format printed on the ballot, it was important to investigate whether having the criteria on the ballot impacted the nature of their comments nonetheless. Table 3

indicates that while there were some differences between round 1 ballots and ballots completed by round 2 and 3 judges who did not use the printed format, no pattern of influence emerges. There is no clear indication that judges had made mental note of the criteria and used them in making comments.

**TABLE 3**  
**Comparison of Non-Criteria Ballots and Format Non-Users**  
**(Mean Number of Comments)**

Speech:	Total	Thesis	Link	Support	Organ	Lang	Deliv	Other	RFD
<i>Round 1 (no criteria on ballot)</i>									
(N=228)	4.88	0.29	0.18	2.26	0.49	0.19	1.38	0.12	0.03
<i>Round 2 (non-users of ballot format)</i>									
(N=139)	5.32	0.36	0.35	2.02	0.75	0.17	1.58	0.27	0.04
<i>Round 3 (non-users of ballot format)</i>									
(N=138)	5.06	0.25	0.42	1.72	0.57	0.20	1.28	0.66	0.05
p=	.1549	.2050	.0004	.0016	.0062	.8687	.1412	.0000	.493
Speech:	Total	Thesis	Link	Support	Organ	Lang	Deliv	Other	RFD
<i>Round 1 (no criteria on ballot)</i>									
(N=140)	4.82	0.31	0.19	0.03	0.22	3.44	0.63	0.11	
<i>Round 2 (non-users of ballot format)</i>									
(N=72)	4.09	0.43	0.10	0.22	0.17	2.85	0.28	0.08	
<i>Round 3 (non-users of ballot format)</i>									
(N=138)	4.30	0.48	0.31	0.04	0.38	2.65	0.34	0.10	
p=	.0269	.1307	.0074	.0000	.0732	.0045	.0002	.7847	

Q2: Does a "reason for decision" space motivate judges to explain or justify their rankings and ratings?

Use of the "reason for decision" space did result in a significant difference in ballot comments justifying the competitors' rankings and ratings (see the final column in Tables 1 and 2). More round three ballots contained reason for decision comments. However, in all, 86% of the interpretation ballots and 94% of the speech ballots contained no explicit reason for decision.

Q3: Are each of the NDCF criteria used by judges or do some of them appear to be irrelevant or misunderstood?

A summary of the results concerning judges' use of the National Developmental Conference criteria, displayed in Table 4, shows that even when the criteria were printed on ballots, some standards prompted little comment from judges. For example, with the speech events, more than half of the ballots contained no comment about thesis, motivational link to audience, and language usage. For the interpretation events, more than half of the ballots contained no comments about motivational link to audience, maintenance of author integrity, and theme.

**TABLE 4 Judges' Use of  
Ballot Criteria**

<b>Speech:</b>	<b>Thesis</b>	<b>Link</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Language</b>	<b>Delivery</b>
<i>Percentage Making No Comment</i>						
Rd 1	72.8%	84.2	7.0	59.2	82.9	30.7
Rd 2	50.7	55.0	12.2	37.1	68.1	21.0
Rd 3	54.1	57.2	15.7	44.1	61.1	22.7
Total	59.2	65.5	11.7	46.8	70.7	24.8
<i>Mean Number of Comments for Those Who Commented</i>						
	1.10	1.17	2.29	1.33	1.15	1.99
<b>Range</b>	(1-3)	(1-4)	(1-9)	(1-6)	(1-5)	(1-7)
<b>Interp:</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Link</b>	<b>Integrity</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Delivery</b>	
<i>Percentage Making No Comment</i>						
Rd 1	77.1%	82.9	97.1	84.3	7.1	
Rd 2	36.4	58.6	52.9	57.1	6.4	
Rd 3	43.4	49.3	72.8	49.3	4.4	
Total	52.4	63.7	74.3	63.7	6.0	
<i>Mean Number of Comments for Those Who Commented</i>						
	1.13	1.05	1.05	1.15	3.16	
<b>Range</b>	(1-4)	(1-2)	(1-2)	(1-4)	(1-11)	

Q4: Does use of ballot format vary among types of judges, events, divisions, or level of rank and rate?

The second segments of Table 1 and of Table 2 report significant differences in ballot comments among types of judges. As ought to be the case, the better ballots were written by directors of forensics. Program assistants appeared to be the weakest group of judges in this study. They tended to write fewer comments; they are less likely to comment on thesis, organization, and language in speech events; and

they are less likely to comment on purpose, motivational link, and literature integrity in interpretation events.

The third segments of Table 1 and of Table 2 show some significant differences among events. The persuasion ballots contained the fewest comments, least attention to organization and language, and greater focus on delivery and miscellaneous comments. Judges seemed least concerned about motivational link to the audience in extemporaneous speaking and communication analysis. While communication analysis ballots contained an expected greater focus on supporting material/analysis, they, as with the persuasion ballots, contained fewer comments on organization and language. For the interpretation events, judges gave greater attention to purpose on prose and programmed interpretation ballots, while duo judges commented extensively on vocal and physical delivery.

There were a few division differences among the speech events, as evidenced by the final segment of Table 1. As might be expected, judges addressed more comments on support-analysis and miscellaneous matters and fewer comments on organization to championship division speakers. Novices received more frequent comments about the thesis of their presentation. Attention to delivery was lower as the level of competition increased. There were no divisional differences among the interpretation events. There were also no differences in ballot comments based on ranking or rating.

#### Discussion

*Criteria Referenced Format.* If more and varied relevant comments are an indicator of better critiques, then use of criteria referenced ballot forms has the potential to improve a significant proportion of tournament ballots. While there were more directors of forensics who used rather than ignored the ballot format, there were a few judges in other categories who also "complied" with the ballot provided. A weakness of this particular project is that no judge training other than two pages of event rules was provided. If judges received stronger encouragement to use the ballot format, and the criteria and their importance were explained to judges, then one could hope for even stronger results (see Hanson, 1989 and Dean, 1988). While some judges may continue to prefer to use their own format for comments, additional training might increase the salience of the ballot criteria.

*Reason for Decision.* While providing a "reason for decision" on ballots did appear to promote a few more comments justifying students' placement in rounds, the overall paucity of comments in this category indicates that more work is needed if forensics educators deem the reason for decision an important element of individual events ballots.

The number of comments recorded in this category is, in fact, an overestimate of their usefulness as "tough round" gives little clue for improvement to competitors or coaches. Some judges used the space to summarize two or three items for improvement in a student's presentation; while this is very helpful feedback, it is not necessarily justification of the judge's decision. This observation brings up the tension between educational and competitive emphases. Placing greater emphasis on reason for decision emphasizes the competitive aspect of forensics; perhaps that is more important for championship level speakers. From an educational perspective, a student may be helped more by a comment such as "You need to do x and y to improve your introduction" than by a reason for decision which reads "Your introduction was weak."

*NDCF Criteria.* The individual events work group which drafted the NDCF ballot criteria "sought to draw up standards that would preserve the creativity so apparent in individual events, while providing the judge with enough information to write useful comments on the ballot." The work group felt that these criteria "would direct the attention of judges to the crucial areas of the students' performance" (Murphy, 87). The results of this research indicate some, but not overwhelming, fulfillment of those hopes. That several of the criteria are significantly underused raises several concerns.

First, while lack of comment may, in some cases, mean that student performance was adequate or good in a given category, from an educational perspective, such lack of comment deprives students of feedback. In particular, students miss out on feedback of a positive or reinforcing type. Students and coaches ought to know, for example, if the judge could identify the thesis or claim from which the speech was developed.

Second, the low proportions of comments in both speech and interpretation events regarding motivational link with the audience support a general intuition that judges do not know what to do with this criterion. Is the judge supposed to report his/her "liking" of or interest in the topic or selection (a common type of comment)? Or is the judge to evaluate how the student attempted to link his/her presentation to a college forensic audience generally? Forensics educators have discussed on various occasions the importance of audience adaptation and the difficulty of accomplishing such adaptation in the relatively "closed environment" of forensics competition. There are certainly variations in the ability of students in various divisions and events ("prepared" vs. "limited preparation," for example) to adapt to the specific judge and panel of listeners. It seems safe to say that the individual events community needs more discussion of and education about this criterion.

Third, despite three of the five interpretation event criteria relating to what have been termed communication or literary rather than performance elements (Pelias, 1984), the strong emphasis of ballots on vocal and physical delivery suggests that judges have yet to see oral interpretation as a forensic event. If we support the argumentative perspective of forensics, then we ought to encourage judges to make greater use of the purpose, link, and thematic development criteria on ballots (see Swarts, 1988 and Verlinden, 1987).

Fourth, at least two of the NDCF criteria deserve revision. The "use of appropriate language" criterion and, especially, the "maintain the ethical integrity of the literature" criterion are threshold standards. While certainly important, they are the criteria most likely to provoke a yes/no response from the judge. It would seem more useful to have speech ballots prompt judge comments on clarity, propriety, and variety of students' language choices. We ought to do more to educate students and critics about the importance of stylistic excellence. The weakness of the integrity standard in interpretation is most clearly seen when a potential parallel criterion for speech events is forwarded: "Did the speaker plagiarize his/her presentation?" Of course, we want students neither to violate author integrity nor plagiarize material. How is a judge to know if the literature has been abused if he/she has never seen it before? (A common ballot comment under this category is "I guess so.") Perhaps ethical integrity ought to be addressed in event rules rather than in ballot criteria. What ballots do tend to include are comments about the appropriateness of the literature for the interpreter, quality of the literature, and commonness of the literature in competition. While there are difficult biases possible in each of those areas, perhaps a better criterion for our ballots would be: "Did the interpreter choose appropriate literature for self, theme, and audience?"

*Variations Observed.* The relative weaknesses of ballots written by program assistants is troubling. While it may have been an idiosyncrasy of the given tournament or year (see Bartanen, 1987), we may need to be more concerned about training assistant coaches to write better ballots. Our tendency may be to assume too often that because they have recently been competitors, graduate assistants and other assistants know what constitutes a good ballot. They may even write good "competitive" ballots. Over the years we have spent considerable time and effort discussing means of training "lay" judge-critics. We may need to direct similar attention to helping assistants make the transition from competitors to forensics educators.

Some of the findings with regard to particular events are consistent with previous research. Extemporaneous ballots studied here appear to be similar to those examined by Harris (1986). There are similarities, as

well, for communication analysis ballots (see Harris, 1987; Larson, 1985; and Dean and Benoit, 1984), although this study shows less emphasis on organization. Again, it is difficult to say that no comment necessarily means disinterest; perhaps the low number of comments on organization and language use in communication analysis and persuasion—the two "most prepared" speech events—means that student performances were strong enough in structure and word choice that judges did not feel a need to comment on those criteria. The greater attention to delivery in interpretation events is also consistent with prior research (see Pelias, 1984 and Verlinden, 1987).

#### Conclusion

This research is an initial attempt to study the usefulness of criteria referenced ballots. The project would have been stronger if joined with a two-wave follow-up survey. We should have asked judges at the conclusion of the tournament for feedback regarding their use of the various ballot forms. Questions about ease of completion; relative value of the criteria in ranking, rating, and critiquing student presentations; and use of "reason for decision" would have been both appropriate and helpful. In addition, we should have mailed a short survey to coaches shortly after the tournament to gain input regarding their perceptions of the usefulness of the various ballot forms in coaching their students. Nonetheless, this research indicates that use of a criteria referenced ballot—perhaps with a modified form of the NDCF criteria—will improve tournament feedback for students and coaches.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Ballots were collected at the Logger Invitational Tournament, held in November 1988 at the University of Puget Sound. Twenty-seven schools participated. Individual events included extemporaneous, informative, persuasive argument analysis, communication analysis, prose, duo, and programmed oral interpretation.

<sup>2</sup>"Other" judges included graduate students in speech communication, communication faculty members, law students, a high school speech teacher, and friends of visiting coaches.

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## A Content Analysis of Public Address Critiques: In Search of Uniqueness in Evaluative Criteria and Judging Practices

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While a number of benefits are inexorably linked to forensics competition, the greatest is pedagogical. Educational opportunities afforded to forensics students abound, ranging from heightened confidence levels, to improved presentational skills, to greater knowledge of speech composition and argument cogency. The primary means through which these ends are achieved are individual coaching and the adjudication that takes place in tournament settings.

In this study, the adjudication process as it is practiced within individual events competition is examined. Specifically, public address ballots are examined for (1) the number of comments, and (2) the types of comments. Ballots both with and without event-specific criteria are examined for differences in each of the aforementioned areas.

### **Individual Event Judging: Current Research and Opinion**

The First National Developmental Conference on Individual Events was held in August of 1988. Among the concerns discussed at that meeting was the practice of judging individual events. Tucker (1989), for example, argued for the use of judging philosophy statements, similar to those used in debate, in individual events. Allen and Dennis (1989) made a case for a hierarchy of evaluative standards to be applied in informative speaking, persuasion, and communication analysis. Jensen (1989) detailed results of a content analysis of original event ballots. Reporting that most comments were directed toward content, he suggested that critics both recognize and respond to the uniqueness of public address events—the original nature of the message being presented.

Not only was evaluative criteria a topic of discussion at the conference, so too was the role of the individual event critic. Jones (1989) observed that when a critic is given a set of ballots and asked to critique a section of competition, "that individual is not merely the judge of that panel, but has in actuality become the teacher of each student in that room" (p. 49). To that extent, Jones argued that "each ballot must be viewed as a pedagogical tool" (p. 49).

While the 1988 conference offered a forum for discussion of judging practices in individual events, the debate was a continuation of past

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discussion. Olson and Wells (1988) have presented a case for soliciting reasons for decisions on individual event ballots. The researchers noted that "criteria which are simple enough for lay judges to understand and apply, yet which provide a fair and useful distinction among speakers in a round would prove invaluable" (p. 6). Other research has been directed at identifying the specific nature of ballot content. Preston (1983) observed that critics in extemporaneous and impromptu speaking gave nearly identical feedback to students. From these results, Preston argued both that "judges at the tournament tended to treat impromptu as mini-extemp," and that "the results point(ed) to the need for judges to enforce the rules given for limited preparation events" (p. 7).

Hanson (1989; 1987) has attempted to clarify further the role played by critics of individual event competition. In a paper presented at the First Developmental Conference on the Future Role of Pi Kappa Delta in the Forensic Community, Hanson addressed the need to develop clear expectations for critics of individual events. In this vein, he wrote that, as critics, "we should make an effort to focus on the positive and to be more instructional in the comments we make on the ballot" (1989, p. 14). Furthermore, he suggested that tournament directors make use of ballots providing criteria of evaluation for the critic.

In previous research, Hanson (1987) surveyed forensics students in an effort to identify their perceptions of what characterizes "good" and "bad" judges. Hanson discovered that the number one trait of a good judge was the writing of "concrete, helpful comments in a sufficient amount that you can learn from them" (p. 9). Pratt (1987) discussed the role of the judge in individual events rounds in terms of his/her being an educator. He asserted that individual event ballots serve the functions of both judging and coaching. As a function of judging, critics obviously rank and rate performances, thereby evaluating them in reference to others in the same section of competition. By coaching, Pratt meant "evaluating a performance within an educational context by making comments on its overall quality and by offering suggestions for improvement in later performances" (p. 1).

While the role of individual events competition grows as an integral part of opportunities open to forensics students, so too must the debate over the role of individual events critics continue. As is evidenced in this review of research and opinion, the role of the individual events critic in the overall forensics experience is an important one. It is upon that premise that the present study is conducted.

### Methodology

Public address ballots for this study are from Fall, 1988, forensics tournaments held at two regional Midwestern universities—the University of Missouri - St. Louis and The Wichita State University. Each ballot pool is used in separate studies, after which results from the two are totaled.

In each study two different ballots are used—one with evaluative criteria specific to the event being judged and the other without such criteria. (See Appendix A for a sample of each ballot used in this research.) One ballot type was used for all public address events during a given round. Each ballot was analyzed for the total number of comments, as well as category of comments (delivery, content, or "other," meaning topic selection, confidence/poise, and generally positive/negative comments). Statistical analyses consist of percentages and mean scores.

In conducting the content analyses for each study, "any sentence, phrase, or single word that provides some critique of the speaker's performance or advice for improvement" is considered a comment (Preston, 1983, p. 2).

In each study, the following research questions are answered:

- R1 Of the criteria and non-criteria ballots, what is the total number of comments directed toward categories labeled as delivery, content, or other?
- R2 What differences exist in the total number of comments made, as well as the categorization of comments, as a result of including criteria, or not including criteria on ballots?

### Results

Each study is discussed independent of the other, after which the two tournaments are combined. In each study, results are presented for events represented in the ballot pool, after which all events are totaled.

#### **Study One - University of Missouri - St. Louis**

Four individual events are included in this study: persuasion, communication analysis, informative, and after-dinner. For each event, an equal number of ballots with and without evaluative criteria is analyzed. Non-criteria ballots were distributed during the first round, while second round ballots included evaluative criteria.

A total of 50 persuasion ballots were analyzed (see Table 1). Major differences exist in this event between the percentages of comments in each category as a result of offering evaluative criteria on ballots. While delivery-oriented comments dominate those made on non-criteria ballots, nearly 60% of the comments made on criteria ballots were directed toward content. Additionally, over 100 more comments

appeared on criteria ballots than on those without criteria, with a mean total of comments on criteria ballots nearly doubling the mean on non-criteria forms.

**Table 1: Persuasion**

<i>Criteria ballots (n = 25)</i>			
<b>Content</b>	<b>Delivery</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Total</b>
156	73	34	263
59%	27%	13%	100%
6.24	2.92	1.36	10.52
<i>Non-Criteria ballots (n=25)</i>			
51	60	27	138
37%	43%	20%	100%
2.04	2.40	1.08	5.52

Communication analysis ballot totals are based on six ballots for each round (see Table 2). Results in this event clearly indicate a larger number of comments (62), mean total of comments per ballot (10.33),

**Table 2:**

<i>Criteria ballots (n = 6)</i>			
<b>Content</b>	<b>Delivery</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Total</b>
44	11	7	62
71%	18%	11%	100%
7.33	1.83	1.17	10.33
<i>Non-Criteria ballots (n = 6)</i>			
14	15	8	37
38%	40%	22%	100%
2.33	2.50	1.33	6.16

and more content-based comments (44) on criteria ballots than on non-criteria ballots. Communication analysis, while a small event, is also somewhat unique. It can be argued that if any event is inappropriate for an inexperienced critic, communication analysis would be that event. The nature of this competition is such that an application of credible methods of rhetorical criticism be made to communication artifacts. Even for critics who boast a background in forensics, this can be a difficult event to critique. Perhaps the difference in numbers indicates the value of placing criteria on communication analysis ballots as a means through which critics can better evaluate the event.

A total of 36 informative ballots were analyzed (see Table 3). Like persuasion and communication analysis, results for informative speak-

ing suggest a difference in the types of comments made by critics as a result of placing event-specific criteria on ballots. However, those differences are unique from the previously discussed events. Slightly more comments (155) appear on informative ballots lacking criteria. However, consistent with persuasion and communication analysis, more content based comments are made on ballots with criteria. An interesting result is the significantly larger number of delivery based comments appearing on non-criteria ballots than on criteria ballots (61 vs. 39).

**Table 3: Informative Speaking**

<i>Criteria ballots (n = 18)</i>			
<b>Content</b>	<b>Delivery</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Total</b>
89	39	14	142
63%	27%	10%	100%
4.94	2.17	.78	7.89
<i>Non-Criteria ballots (n = 18)</i>			
85	61	9	155
55%	39%	.06%	100%
4.72	3.39	.50	8.61

A total of 26 after-dinner ballots were analyzed (see Table 4). An interesting result from the after dinner analysis is the large number of comments appearing on non-criteria ballots, nearly double the number appearing on criteria ballots. Furthermore, a far greater percentage of content-based comments appears on non-criteria ballots than on those with criteria, whereas the larger percentage of comments on criteria ballots are geared toward delivery.

**Table 4: After Dinner Speaking**

<i>Criteria ballots (n = 13)</i>			
<b>Content</b>	<b>Delivery</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Total</b>
15	20	11	46
33%	43%	24%	100%
1.15	1.54	.85	3.54
<i>Non-Criteria ballots (n = 13)</i>			
44	22	17	83
53%	27%	20%	100%
3.39	1.69	1.30	6.38

Totals for study one are presented in terms of the number of comments by category and total for each type of ballot (see Table 5). Furthermore, percentages are presented indicating which type of ballot

solicited the greater number of comments, both by category and overall totals.

**Table 5: Totals for Study One**

<b>Content</b>	<i>Total Ballot Pool (n-124)</i>		<b>Total</b>
	<b>Delivery</b>	<b>Other</b>	
498	301	127	926
<b>304</b>	<i>Criteria ballots (n-62)</i>		513
<b>61%</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>66</b>	100%
	<b>48%</b>	<b>52%</b>	
194	<i>Non-Criteria ballots (n = 62)</i>		413
<b>39%</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>61</b>	100%
	<b>52%</b>	<b>48%</b>	

Results from the first study indicate that criteria ballots result in a larger percentage of comments than do non-criteria ballots. Furthermore, over 61 percent of the total comments directed toward content were expressed on criteria ballots. These results are notable in that they support a difference in the direction of, and number of comments made on ballots as a result of including evaluative criteria on ballots.

#### **Study Two - The Wichita State University**

Events analyzed at The Wichita State University forensics tournament include persuasion, informative speaking, and after-dinner speaking. Round one ballots include criteria for each event represented in this analysis, while round two ballots were absent of any evaluative standards. As in study one, results are presented for each event, after which totals for the second study are presented in a separate table.

A total of 40 persuasion ballots were analyzed, with 20 being used in each round (see Table 6). Several noteworthy results appear at this

**Table 6: Persuasion**

<i>Criteria ballots (n = 20)</i>			
<b>Content</b>	<b>Delivery</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Total</b>
88	56	20	164
54%	34%	12%	100%
4.4	2.80	1	8.20
<i>Non-Criteria ballots (n = 20)</i>			
105	50	18	173
61%	29%	10%	100%
5.25	2.50	.90	8.65

point in the second study. A slightly larger number of comments appear on non-criteria ballots (173 vs. 164). Furthermore, a larger number of

content-based comments appear on non-criteria ballots than on ballots containing evaluative guidelines. Likewise, slightly more delivery based comments appear on criteria ballots than on non-criteria forms.

Results for informative speaking are based upon 46 ballots (see Table 7). For both criteria and non-criteria ballots the largest percentage of comments were directed toward content, with the larger percentage of those comments appearing on criteria ballots. Although more comments appear on criteria ballots, both totals are relatively comparable, suggesting little difference in using either ballot form in informative speaking.

**Table 7: Informative Speaking**

<i>Criteria ballots (n = 23)</i>			
<b>Content</b>	<b>Delivery</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Total</b>
119	78	18	215
56%	36%	8%	100%
5.17	3.39	.78	9.34
<i>Non-Criteria ballots (n = 23)</i>			
89	11	18	184
48%	42%	10%	100%
3.87	3.35	.78	8

The analysis of after-dinner speaking includes 22 ballots (see Table 8). Although a larger number of comments appear on non-criteria after-dinner speaking ballots, a greater percentage of comments based on content appear on criteria forms. A well-balanced distribution of comments between content and delivery appears on non-criteria forms.

**Table 8: After Dinner Speaking**

<i>Criteria ballots (n = 11)</i>			
<b>Content</b>	<b>Delivery</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Total</b>
34	25	9	68
50%	37%	13%	100%
3.1	2.27	.81	6.18
<i>Non-Criteria ballots (n = 11)</i>			
28	29	17	74
38%	39%	23%	100%
2.55	2.64	1.54	6.73

Totals for study two are based upon the 108 ballots analyzed in this second study (see Table 9). Totals show parity in the numbers of com-

ments made by category and total. While more comments are made in the area of content on criteria ballots, the difference is marginal. Such is also the case for the total number of comments, slightly larger for criteria forms but not significantly so. Results of study two seem to suggest very little difference in the use of criteria or non-criteria ballots in increasing or decreasing the number of comments made public address ballots.

**Table 9: Totals for Study Two**

<b>Content</b>	<i>Total ballots (n = 108)</i>		<b>Total</b>
	<b>Delivery</b>	<b>Other</b>	
463	315	100	878
241	<i>Criteria ballots (n = 54)</i>		447
52%	159	47	51%
	50%	47%	
222	<i>Non-Criteria ballots (n = 54)</i>		431
48%	156	53	49%
	50%	53%	

#### **Studies One and Two: Combined Results**

Certainly differences exist for studies one and two. Cumulative include the total number of comments analyzed in this research effort, as well as totals by category (see Table 10). As was the case in each study, percentages of comments by category and total are also presented as they appear on each ballot form. As the combined totals seem to suggest, the slight difference in total numbers of comments weighs in favor of criteria ballots. However, this number is not necessarily large

**Table 10: Studies One and Two Combined**

<b>Content</b>	<i>Total ballots (n = 132)</i>		<b>Total</b>
	<b>Delivery</b>	<b>Other</b>	
961	616	227	1804
	<i>Criteria ballots (n = 54)</i>		
544	302	113	960
57%	49%	50%	53%
	<i>Non-Criteria ballots (n = 54)</i>		
416	314	114	844
43%	51%	50%	47%

enough to suggest an absolute difference. A greater difference does exist in the number of content-specific comments, with 57% of the content comments appearing on criteria ballots. A great deal of parity exists in the percentage of general comments, and of delivery comments, suggesting that perhaps the existence of criteria on ballots makes little difference in perception of delivery skills.

These results are discussed in terms of their implications on judging practice. Also discussed are differences that appear to exist or not exist, as indicated by studies one and two, as a result of placing evaluative criteria on ballots.

### Discussion

Initially, two research questions served as the focus for this study. Objective answers to both questions have already been presented. However, implications of those answers merit further discussion.

Combined totals of both studies suggest that comments based on content of public address forensics performances dominates the attention of critics. Figures extrapolated from Table 10 show that 53% of the comments analyzed in both studies, and on both ballots, pertain directly to content, while only 34% pertain to delivery. These results confirm other content analyses of ballots (Jensen, 1989; Olson and Wells, 1988; Preston, 1983). This should be seen as a positive outcome of this study. The uniqueness of public address events is the original nature of what is presented. To find that most comments are directed toward that uniqueness suggests that a great deal of integrity regarding the intended purpose of public address events is being maintained.

Regarding the second research question, results are somewhat less conclusive. While differences were found in the number and direction of comments made on both criteria and non-criteria ballots, those differences were slight. It was expected that significant differences would exist in both the total number of comments, and in the number of comments directed specifically toward content. While differences were found in both of these areas, in neither case were differences large enough to enable definitive conclusions to be drawn. A possible exception lies in comments directed toward content. A 14% difference does suggest that criteria ballots can be effective at soliciting comments geared toward content. Replication of this research would further confirm that suggestion.

Although delivery is, to a certain extent, unique to each public address event, the primary uniqueness lies in the content of each event. Persuasion, for example, mandates that students effectively challenge an audiences' beliefs and values. Communication analysis mandates that communication artifacts be analyzed through the application of

acceptable and appropriate rhetorical methods. Comments directed toward content in any public address event have the high propensity of attending to the considerations that are important to each event being performed as it is intended. The more that comments on public address ballots are geared toward content, the more the integrity of the event is maintained.

On a similar note, much discussion in past years has centered on the adoption of evaluative criteria for individual events. All too often, however, the criteria that is suggested is specific only to the general category of individual events (interpretation or public speaking) and not the specific event. To assert that a set of evaluative criteria general to public speaking can capture the uniqueness of each public speaking event is to sell short the rationale in having four different public address events, not to mention two limited preparation events. Some research exists that illustrates the importance of identifying unique aspects of each public address or limited preparation event (Allen and Dennis, 1989; Preston, 1983). While organization, a command of language, and use of support material is important to all public speaking events, support material is used very differently in communication analysis than in persuasion; data may take on less importance in after-dinner speaking than in informative speaking. To adopt criteria general to categories of individual events (public address and interpretation) is worthwhile. However, to concentrate attention only on those general criteria is to sell short the intended objectives of each specific event.

There are a number of other results from this research that call for further discussion. Extrapolations of figures presented in Table 10 show that an average of eight comments appeared on each ballot analyzed (7.77). While this number is larger for criteria ballots (8.27) the results indicate that a greater number of comments should be made to students in these events. While it is difficult to suggest the "ideal" number of comments, the amount of feedback to students certainly has a direct effect on benefits students accrue during the tournament experience (Hanson, 1987). It is essential for student growth that whenever possible, critics record on ballots their reactions to student performances.

Another result that is difficult to explain is the vast difference in category of comments made in study one and study two, as well as the difference in the impact of having criteria or non-criteria ballots for critics. While little difference exists in the total numbers of comments made on either ballot form in either study, a nearly 10% difference in the number of content comments made on either ballot form exists from one study to the other, with criteria ballots used at the University of Missouri - St. Louis soliciting a higher percentage of content comments than criteria ballots at The Wichita State University. Although

perhaps a clear explanation for the differences does not exist, a number of suggestions can be made. The order in which ballots were distributed differed at each tournament; criteria ballots were used in round two of the first study and in round one of the second study. It is possible that order is an additional factor that influenced the direction of comments. A second possible explanation lies in the judging pool. If one tournament made use of more "experienced judges" in the events examined than did the other, the result of including criteria on ballots may have been effected. It is possible that an inexperienced judge can make greater use of criteria than can an individual who has experience with coaching or judging an event. At any rate, a data pool examining several tournaments would be more effective at identifying the means through which more content-specific comments can be solicited.

While not significant, differences in comments made on different ballot forms do suggest a justification for further experimentation with event criteria placed on ballots. Tournament directors should include ballots for each individual event that provide event-specific criteria. If indeed a greater number of comments is made on criteria ballots, and those comments are directed toward unique aspects of any one event, then the potential for student growth, both competitively and educationally, is great. Results from this research suggest that criteria on ballots do result in the aforementioned benefits.

Not only can criteria on ballots aid in student growth, it can also benefit critics lacking in coaching or judging experience in a particular event. It is a nearly universal fact of tournament management that inexperienced judges must be used in order to maintain a judging pool adequate enough to host tournaments. An inexperienced, or "lay" judge "is not inherently incompetent...simply inexperienced in the practice of judging forensics events" (Jensen, 1989, p. 10). To offer these critics standards by which they can evaluate a speech is to help them tailor comments toward important aspects of the event. Students benefit from meaningful feedback, while the critic is made to feel more confident in their judging role.

To place evaluative criteria on public address ballots is not an act that inhibits reactions critics can make to students. The criteria merely highlights elements of the performance that should be taken into account when rating students and reacting to their performances. To that extent, it seems reasonable to experiment with evaluative criteria as a means through which the forensics experience can be made more positive for all involved.

### **Directions for Future Research**

In addition to replications, other avenues for further research stems from these studies. Research directed toward differences in the amount of and any type of comments made by lay and experienced judges would help forensics educators to better coach students who must adapt to different critics. In addition, such an understanding would help tournament directors to better adapt their management practices to the needs of their inexperienced judges pool.

Another area of potential interest lies in correlations that may exist between rankings/ratings given to students and the number of comments, or category of comments made on those same ballots. Although not computed as part of this research, it was noticed during the analyses of ballots that several students who ranked highly in their rounds received more comments than did those ranking below them. Additionally, students who were both rated and ranked low in their rounds received more comments categorized as "other," such as reassurance of their potential, or the competitive nature of that specific round. It might be interesting and worthwhile to identify any relationships that exist between ballot content and rating/ranking of students.

### **Summary**

The pedagogical benefits to be accrued through participation in forensics are not debatable. However, these benefits are not guaranteed; they are attained through responsible coaching and judging. While room for improvement always exists, this research suggests that we are on the right track toward providing students with a positive forensics experience.

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**APPENDIX A****Persuasive Speaking Ballot**

Contestant \_\_\_\_\_ Round \_\_\_\_\_

School Code Number \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_

Topic \_\_\_\_\_ Room \_\_\_\_\_

Note to Judges: Please rank each student from 1 to 5, with no ties except for 5th place. Additionally, rate each speaker from 70 to 100, with ties allowable on ratings.

Criteria: Please judge the speaker on the following criteria:

1. Delivery - The student should deliver their ideas in an interesting and natural manner that conveys the mood of the topic without distracting listeners. Movement should be purposeful and the vocal personality of the speaker should demonstrate control and variation. If used, visual aids should be handled well.
2. Topic - The topic should be multi-sided and significant in its impact on a general audience. The student's subject should also be clearly persuasive or controversial, with a clear problem being presented.
3. Research and Reasoning - Arguments advanced by the student should be both sound and valid. Evidence used should have sufficient quality and relevancy to support ideas in an appropriate manner.
4. Language - The student's position on the topic should be clearly illustrated in the language of the speech. Language should be vivid, specific, and well commanded. Figurative language should be appropriate to the speech as opposed to being stylized or forced.
5. Organization - Ideas should flow clearly and logically within a structure inclusive of a motivating introduction and a focused conclusion. The structure of the speech should be appropriately motivational for the topic

With this criteria in mind, please use the space below *and the back of this form if needed* to provide comments which you feel will help the student improve his/her performance in this event, and to understand the ranking and rating he/she received.

Rank 1 2 3 4 5 (no ties except for 5)

Rating: (between 100 and 70)

Judge \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

Number of tournaments judged this year \_\_\_\_\_

## Informative Speaking Ballot

Contestant \_\_\_\_\_ Round \_\_\_\_\_

School/Code \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_

Topic \_\_\_\_\_ Room \_\_\_\_\_

Note to Judges: Please rank each student from 1 to 5, with no ties except for 5th place. Additionally, rate each speaker from 70 to 100, with ties allowable on ratings.

Criteria: Please judge the speaker on the following criteria:

1. Delivery - The student should deliver their ideas in an interesting and natural manner that conveys the mood of the topic without distracting listeners. Movement should be purposeful and the vocal personality of the speaker should demonstrate control and variation. If used, visual aids should be handled well.
2. Topic - The topic for this speech should be significant enough to be of interest to a general audience. While uniqueness in topic selection is valuable, the subject must appeal to a wide variety of individuals.
3. Research - The student should inform the audience through the use of quality research. Equally important as the number of sources in the speech is the quality of the sources cited.
4. Organization - The speech should be both clear and coherent. Main ideas should be relatively balanced in their development. A clear introduction and appropriate conclusion should also be present.
5. Language and Development - The language choice should be clear, well-defined, and appropriate for the topic. The speaker should strive to inform the audience, and not advocate a position, or clearly persuade the audience on an issue. If used, visual aids should be purposeful and supplemental, as opposed to dominant in the speech.

With this criteria in mind, please use the space below *and the back of this form if needed* to provide comments which you feel will help the student improve his/her performance in this event, and to understand the ranking and rating he/she received.

Rank: 1 2 3 4 5 (no ties except for 5)

Rating: (between 100 and 70) \_\_\_\_\_

Judge \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

Number of tournaments judged this year \_\_\_\_\_

Have you competed in forensics? \_\_\_\_\_ In this event?

## After Dinner Speaking Ballot

Contestant \_\_\_\_\_ Round \_\_\_\_\_

School/Code \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_

Topic \_\_\_\_\_ Room \_\_\_\_\_

Note to Judges: Please rank each student from 1 to 5, with no ties except for 5th place. Additionally, rate each speaker from 70 to 100, with ties allowable on ratings.

Criteria: Please judge the speaker on the following criteria:

1. Delivery - The student should deliver their ideas in an interesting and natural manner that conveys the mood of the topic without distracting listeners. Movement should be purposeful and the vocal personality of the speaker should demonstrate control and variation. If used, visual aids should be handled well.
2. Topic - The student should select subject matter that is appropriate for a general audience. While the topic should be tasteful, it also should be significant to a general audience.
3. Development - The speaker should concentrate the speech on a significant issue throughout the speech, taking a humorous, or light-hearted approach to the topic. However, the speech should also include a serious point within its development.
4. Language and Analysis - This event is a speech event; consequently, the student should demonstrate a command of language skills without presenting a version of a stand-up comic routine. Research is optional, and, if used, should meet the demands of quality research with clearly qualified sources. If visual aids are used, they should be purposeful and supplemental, as opposed to dominant in the speech.
5. Organization - The structure of the speech should flow in a coherent, logical manner. A well-developed, attention-getting introduction should preface the body of the speech, while a well-focused conclusion should also be evident. Additionally, the mood of the speech should be relatively consistent, understanding that at some point the student will need to advance a point more serious in nature than other ideas expressed within the speech.

With this criteria in mind, please use the space below *and the back of this form if needed* to provide comments which you feel will help the student improve his/her performance in this event, and to understand the ranking and rating he/she received.

Rank: 12 3 4 5 (no ties except for 5)

Rating: (between 100 and 70) \_\_\_\_\_

Judge \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

Number of tournaments judged this year \_\_\_\_\_

## Communication Analysis Ballot

Contestant \_\_\_\_\_ Round \_

School/Code \_\_\_\_\_ Section

Topic \_\_\_\_\_ Room \_

Note to Judges: Please rank each student from 1 to 5, with no ties except for 5th place. Additionally, rate each speaker from 70 to 100, with ties allowable on ratings.

Criteria: Please judge the speaker on the following criteria:

1. **Delivery** - The student should deliver their ideas in an interesting and natural manner that conveys the mood of the topic without distracting listeners. Movement should be purposeful and the vocal personality of the speaker should demonstrate control and variation. If used, visual aids should be handled well.
2. **Subject of Analysis** - The student should clearly identify the topic of the speech. Likewise, the subject of the analysis should be significant enough to relate to a general audience.
3. **Method** - The student should clearly explain and justify the method with which they analyze the subject. The method should originate from a qualified source, and should be appropriate for the artifact being analyzed.
4. **Analysis** - The conclusions drawn by the speaker should stem from the application of the rhetorical method. The analysis should couple the application of the method with the student's own insights into the effectiveness of the artifact being analyzed.
5. **Organization** - A clearly developed introduction and conclusion should be a part of the organization. Within the structure of the speech the speaker should also thoroughly develop an explanation of the artifact being analyzed, the method with which the analysis is being conducted, and the conclusions to be drawn from the analysis

With this criteria in mind, please use the space below *and the back of this form if needed* to provide comments which you feel will help the student improve his/her performance in this event, and to understand the ranking and rating he/she received.

Rank: 1 2 3 4 5 (no ties except for 5)

Rating: (between 100 and 70) \_\_\_\_\_

Judge \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

Number of tournaments judged this year \_\_\_\_\_

**UM-ST. LOUIS INDIVIDUAL EVENTS BALLOT**

Event \_\_\_\_\_ Round \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_ Room \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Code \_\_\_\_\_

Please write voluminous constructive comments to the competitor in the space below.

Rank (1-5, no ties) \_\_\_\_\_ Judge \_\_\_\_\_

Rating (100-70) \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

Number of tournaments judged in past 3 months \_\_\_\_\_

Did you ever compete in this event? \_\_\_\_\_

## **The Impact of Written Ballot Criteria on the Frequency and Type of Ballot Comments in Collegiate Limited Preparation Speaking Events**

*C. Thomas Preston, Jr. \**

Scholars and competitors of forensics activities become frustrated when faced with what they perceive as inadequate constructive written feedback on ballots. Hanson (1987b) noted in a survey that the type of judge who offers "concrete, helpful, and truthful comments in a sufficient amount that you can learn from them" tended not only to earn more respect from students, but tended to motivate students to make constructive changes (p. 16). Nonetheless, apparently not all judges exhibit consistently the behaviors noted above. Lewis and Larsen (1981) emphasize the need for consistency among judges for individual events. They state: "Contemporary individual event speech contests are designed to be educational. All too often, however, the contest experience leaves the participant more confused than educated due to inconsistent judging criticism" (p. 9). Hanson (1987a) has gone so far as to say, "Perhaps it is presumptuous for critic-judges to assume that their ballots are contributing to the educational growth of the contestant" (p. 3). Olson and Wells (1988) have noted that students frequently receive contradictory comments with similar scores, as well as similar comments with contradictory scores. Hence, while able to offer advice on how to teach students to adapt to certain critics, coaches may become frustrated when offering constructive advice to students on how to adapt to differing judging techniques.

The need for better and/or more consistent judging in individual events competitions has been the focus of much recent attention among forensic scholars (Aden, 1990; Allen and Dennis, 1989; Carrier and Rodier, 1987; Hanson, 1987a, 1987b, and 1989; Jensen, 1988 and 1989; Jones, 1989; Littlefield, 1987; Olson and Wells, 1988; Pratt, 1987; Preston, 1983; and Sellnow, 1987). Jones (1989) stresses the importance of ballot-feedback, noting that, by writing a ballot, a critic "is not merely the judge of that panel, but has in actuality become the teacher of each student in that room" (p. 49). This paper seeks to contribute toward an understanding of what constitutes the remarks read so closely by participants after the tournaments.

The question arises, then, as to how tournament directors seek to promote effective critic feedback. Tournaments ranging from

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American Legion high school speaking contests to some major collegiate speech tournaments use ballots with criteria printed before the space provided for judge remarks to encourage this consistency. To ensure effectiveness and consistency in ballot-writing at tournaments, a panel discussion at the 1988 Developmental Conference on Individual Events at Denver recommended that criteria be used on ballots, but debated at length what the nature of those criteria should be. Allen and Dennis (1989) went so far as to suggest that a hierarchical criteria be developed for the evaluation of informative, persuasion, and communication analysis (p. 53).

As the practice of using criteria on ballots becomes increasingly debated and widespread, it becomes useful to gain critical insight into how closely critics/judges follow these criteria. Seeking an in-depth analysis of one category of events, the present study poses the central research question, "What impact does printing criteria of judge's ballots have on the frequency and types of comments judges write on ballots for limited preparation events?" To answer this question, the present study first offers a survey of past ballot analysis studies in individual events. Second, it explains the method of the study. Third, it offers and presents the results from the analysis of ballots. Fourth, it discusses to what extent providing criteria on limited preparation event ballots proves beneficial to the educational goals of the events studied.

#### Literature

As indicated by the interest at the First Developmental Conference, the eighties marked the decade where forensic scholars began to explore the judging criteria emerging from written comments of ballots. At the 1981 Speech Communication Association Annual Convention, Cox, Manchester, and Frank (1981) analyzed dimensions in criticism of interpretation events. Preston (1983) extended this line of research to limited preparation events by conducting a content analysis of 152 ballots from the Nebraska Cornhusker Tournament of February 25 and 26, 1983. In that study, Preston compared comments critics wrote on ballots for the two events, concluding that impromptu was being judged as mini-extemp because ballot comments were so similar in the two events. Content-analysis of ballots since then has focused more on a broad range of events. Pratt (1987) conducted a study involving a sample of ballots, finding that judges were writing an average of 6.52 comments per ballot, while Carrier and Rodier (1987) discovered a higher average of approximately 11. Olsen and Wells (1988) discovered from their sample of 211 ballots at national tournaments that judges were making only 3.36 comments per ballot. Olson and Wells, as well as Jensen (1989), have noted that perhaps ballot design

and the addition of criteria might lead to better judging. While contributing in other areas, these studies nonetheless offer at best a partial explanation of why judges comment in what ways, specifically in limited preparation events ballots. Pratt's sample, for example, involved only 50 ballots from limited preparation events, whereas out of the 211 ballots in the Olson and Wells study, only 33 were extemporaneous or impromptu ballots. While its entire sample did consist of limited preparation events ballots, Preston's (1983) study did not yet address how to encourage judges to treat impromptu and extemporaneous speaking differently. The remainder of the studies have either focused on original prepared events or on interpretation events. Even among these studies, only Jensen addresses whether judging behavior can be altered by criteria being written on the ballots.

The limited preparation events offer additional problems for comparing non-criteria ballots to criteria-ballots. First, the brevity of the speeches offers the critic less material to critique than a ten-minute prepared event. Hence, it is not surprising that Olson and Wells (1988) found only 2.36 comments per limited preparation ballot, or one comment fewer per ballot, than in ballots for other events. Second, the differing rules for the events suggest that impromptu should be judged differently from extemporaneous if each event is to meet any unique educational objectives. However, no study has established thus far whether ballot-criteria and/or ballot design can address these event-specific problems.

Other questions that must be explored in order to address whether ballot criteria lead to better written ballot criticism include the following: What types of comments do judges make to speakers on each type of ballot, for each event? How many comments of each type per ballot do they make? What percentages in each category of comment do they make? Do the proportions of comments in categories follow similar patterns on the two types of ballots? Alternatively, do they follow the instructions of the criteria in a way that differentiates them from the comments made on blank ballots? Will judges make fewer comments if there is less space on the front to write?

In proffering the above queries, the present study does **not** "praise the number of comments found on ballots even though a comment may

be classified as a single word."<sup>1</sup> Rather, it contributes to the field of forensics scholarship by post-analytically examining the number of ballot/comments reflecting various areas of emphasis. Providing this information should offer forensics participants an empirical picture representing the nature of comments students receive in these events. For purposes of focus, certain questions are assumed to reside beyond the scope of this study. For example, questions concerning the "quality" of a particular comment are left to the philosophers, and questions concerning "positive and negative" feedback to students are left to future study. Regardless of the stand one takes on what constitutes a good comment, knowing empirically what types of comments occur now provides a necessary starting point on the road to improved ballot feedback. This article's findings represent such a starting point.

#### Method

To answer the above questions, 3,069 comments from 447 ballots were analyzed. The sample of ballots was taken from extemporaneous and impromptu contests at three tournaments during the 1988-89 forensics season: The Gateway Individual Events Tournament at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, the Mel Moorhouse Invitational at Wichita State University, and the Missouri Mule Tournament held at Central Missouri State University. At each tournament, one preliminary round was administered using ballots without criteria (see Appendix I), while another was administered using ballots with criteria (see Appendices II and III). To discourage bias, judges were not encouraged to pay special attention to the ballots any more than they would have been at any other tournament. The sample thus contained 79 extemporaneous ballots without criteria and 83 extemporaneous ballots with criteria; it also included 145 impromptu ballots without criteria, and 140 with criteria provided. Thus, the total sample included 224 ballots with-

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<sup>1</sup>In a paper presented at the Second National Developmental Conference on Individual Events at Denver, Colorado, Aden (1990) offers an excellent rationale for new standards governing each individual event. However, his paper's allegation that Preston (1983) and Jensen (1988) promote quantity over quality in ballot feedback ignores the scope of the two studies. As in the present study, both studies **do** recognize the need for critics to tell students both **why** a certain action was right or wrong and **how** the student could either continue a desirable behavior or discontinue an undesirable behavior. But for the discussion of such qualitative factors to gain any practical value, it becomes necessary to gain some idea of what types of comments students actually receive in what frequency now, within the limitations of the sample. As the Preston and Jensen studies seek explicitly to give some unprecedented measure of what types of comments actually occur, qualitative discussion of individual ballot-comments fall outside the realm of these studies, except to explain the nature of the categories. Of course, this is **not** to deny the value of future studies discussing qualitatively the direction individual comments should take, or that some comments are of more value than others to certain participants.

out criteria, and 223 with criteria. A small difference in the sample size was due to a few no-show ballots, whose records were eliminated from the samples for averaging purposes. Thus, the statistical analyses comparing means among samples were conducted using formulas for differing sample sizes.

Upon reading the ballots, the number of comments was counted. A comment is defined as any sentence, phrase, paragraph, or single word that provides some critique of the speaker's performance or advice for improvement. Structurally, the term "comment" as used in this study parallels closely Bormann's concept "fantasy theme"—the smallest unit of analysis (Bormann, 1972). Consistent with the earlier studies by Pratt (1987) and Olson and Wells (1988), the main criterion for counting what a judge writes as a "comment" is that it contains such a single thought for analysis, whether the thought be a word, phrase, sentence, or paragraph. For example, "It's best to use **notecards** rather than legal pads" and "good!" were both counted as single comments because they both relayed a single message. On some occasions, a sentence containing two clauses would reveal different messages. For example, the sentence, "You've talked a good deal about the debates, but you did not provide the information sufficient to back your claims," would be counted as two comments. While it praised the depth of the speaker's analysis of a presidential debate in the first clause, it critiqued the speaker to be more thorough in the information presented in the second. However, sentences such as, "Because of your humor, I was at ease," would be classified as a single comment.

All comments on all ballots were then broken down into content categories. An inductive method was used to generate these categories, with new categories created each time a comment appeared that did not appear in a previously encountered classification. All categories, including miscellaneous, were used for statistical analysis. While the names for the categories of comments were similar to those found in the Preston (1983) study, the categories were, nonetheless, post-analytically derived. The reflection of the 1983 results in terms of category generation, of course, confirms the importance of those categories. The categories were defined as follows:

1. Delivery—any comment addressing any issue related to either physical presentation of materials, as opposed to the materials themselves. Examples: "Good, smooth delivery." "The rate was very good." "Very nice conversational style." "Good that you were not dependent on notes."

2. Specific Analysis—any comment addressing **explicitly** the quality of the way a speaker handled specific content in the speech. Examples: "You shouldn't make it so obvious that you preferred Bush

in this year's election." "(you need to) detail more reasons for price increases." "Your position contradicts all published opinion about the first presidential debate."

3. Organization—any comment related to the structure of the student's speech: Examples: "Your speech was difficult to follow." "Sign posting needs to be clearer." "Work on your transition." "Good job of telling me where you are going with this." "Stick to your original outline."

4. Analysis (general)—any comment assessing the student's analysis but not referring to specific content in the speech. Examples: "Your overall analysis was good." "You miss the general thesis of this topic."

5. Introduction—any comment that focuses on the introduction of the speech. Examples: "Your intro was outstanding." "Good preview of your main points." "Nice attention-getter."

6. Supporting material—any comment questioning or applauding the student's sources and/or examples. Examples: "You made a lot of assertions that needed to be backed by evidence." "You need more evidentiary support for your position." "You use too many personal examples."

7. Conclusion—any comment related to the student's conclusion of a speech or closure. Examples: "Nice referring back to your introductory remarks in the conclusion" and "A summary at the end would be helpful."

8. Generally positive—any comment that offers encouragement to the student's overall performance as opposed to a specific aspect of performance. Usually the last comment on a good ballot, although it could be used to encourage anyone. Examples: "You are a marvelous speaker." "Good show!" "Stick with it."

9. Time allocation—any comment that refers to the way a student uses his or her time either before or while speaking. Examples: "You need to use more of your prep time." "You need to spend more time with the second point."

10. Miscellaneous—any comment not fitting into any of the above categories, or comments falling into more than one category simultaneously.

After the ballots were read and comments counted, all of the data were broken down further by event and ballot type for comparative purposes. First, for each event, a frequency count was made of each category, with number of comments, number of comments per ballot, and percentage of comments made on a certain category of comment noted.

Then, for each event, two statistical analyses were performed on the data to determine to what extent the critics made similar comments

to contestants from non-criteria-ballots to criteria ballots. First, for each event, the category totals for the two samples were correlated using Pearson's  $r$  to determine the overall strength of the similarity in comment type from one type of ballot to the other. Then the results were correlated between events. Second,  $t$ -tests were conducted to compare average numbers of comments per category per ballot in each event. For each comment category, the mean number of comments per ballot for non-criteria-ballots were compared to the mean number of comments per ballot for criteria-ballots using the  $t$ -test for statistical significance. The  $t$ -test measure enables us to ascertain whether judges place more emphasis on a particular judging criterion which was either included or omitted from the criteria written on the ballot. For each category, then, our null hypothesis would be that  $t = 0$ , or that there was no significant difference in the average number of comments in a category between the criteria and non-criteria ballots. A .05 level of significance was established as sufficient to disprove the null hypothesis. Thus, when  $t > 1.960$  or  $t < -1.960$ , a change is noted below between the criteria and noncriteria ballots for an event.

### Results

Analysis of the ballots yielded the following breakdown of the 3,069 comments:

<b>Type Of Comment</b>	<i>Without Criteria</i>			<i>With Criteria</i>		
	<b>#</b>	<b>#/bal.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>#/bal.</b>	<b>%</b>
Delivery	196	2.48	27.5	138	1.66	24.3
Specific Analysis	146	1.85	20.5	95	1.14	16.7
General Analysis	78	.99	10.9	85	1.02	14.9
Support	71	.90	9.9	72	.87	12.7
Introduction	65	.83	9.1	51	.61	9.0
Organization	50	.63	7.0	57	.69	10.0
General Positive	43	.54	6.0	20	.24	3.5
Time Allocation	30	.38	4.2	15	.18	2.6
Conclusion	29	.37	4.1	30	.36	5.3
Miscellaneous	5	.04	0.8	6	.07	1.1
Total	713	9.03	100.0	569	6.86	100.0

Table 2

## Impromptu Speaking

## Ballot Type

Type Of Comment	Without Criteria			With Criteria		
	#	#/bal,	%	#	#/bal.	%
Delivery	244	1.68	25.3	216	1.54	26.2
Introduction	134	.92	13.9	67	.48	8.1
Specific Analysis	120	.83	12.4	93	.66	11.3
General Analysis	119	.82	12.3	135	.96	16.4
Organization	109	.73	11.3	94	.67	11.4
Support	78	.54	8.1	103	.74	12.5
General Positive	61	.42	6.3	41	.29	5.0
Time Allocation	52	.36	5.4	37	.26	4.5
Conclusion	35	.24	3.6	26	.19	3.2
Miscellaneous	12	.08	1.2	11	.08	1.3
Total	964	6.65	100.0	823	5.88	100.0

Note: Totals for comments per ballot and percentages may not equal sum of the categories due to rounding.

The Pearson's correlation between the two types of extemporaneous ballots derived from the results noted in Table 1 yielded .947, and a similar correlation between the two types of impromptu ballots derived from the results noted in Table 2 yielded .917. When the frequency distributions were correlated between events, Pearson's  $r$  was .899 between extemporaneous and impromptu ballots without criteria. This finding confirmed the 1983 finding that without criteria on ballots, judges make little if any differentiation between the two events in terms of their ballot comments. However, writing different criteria on the ballots to distinguish the two events did not induce comment differentiation between the two events; in fact, Pearson's  $r$  actually rose to .952 when the criteria ballots for each event were compared. Hence, despite an overt attempt to make the criteria for extemporaneous speaking different from those for impromptu speaking, the comments followed patterns *more* similar for each event when the criteria were added.

The  $t$ -tests comparing the mean numbers of comments per category per ballot between the ballot types yielded six significant results. In extemporaneous speaking, significant declines on criteria ballots were noted in the mean number of comments made in four categories; generally positive, where the mean number of comments per ballot fell from .54 to .24, and  $t = 2.432$  with 160 degrees of freedom; specific analysis, where the mean number of comments fell from 1.85 to

1.14 and  $t = 2.318$  with 160 degrees of freedom; delivery, where the mean number of comments per ballot fell from 2.48 to 1.66 and  $t = 2.782$  with 160 degrees of freedom; and time allocation, where the mean number of comments per ballot fell from .38 to .18 and  $t = 1.988$  with 160 degrees of freedom. In impromptu speaking, two significant results were noted. Mean comments per ballot pertaining to introduction declined markedly from .92 to .48 when criteria were introduced, with  $t = 4.491$  with 283 degrees of freedom. The only significant increase in means noted in the study was in impromptu supporting material, where  $t = -2.054$  with 283 degrees of freedom. There, the mean number of comments per ballot rose from .54 per ballot on the non-criteria ballots to .74 per ballot on the ballots with criteria.

Along with the differences in a few of the categories, significant declines were noted in the overall average numbers of comments for each event. In extemporaneous, the decline in comments from 9.03 per ballot to 6.86 was also noted in a  $t$ -score of 4.275 with 160 degrees of freedom. In impromptu, where the decline was less dramatic, going from a mean of 6.65 without criteria to 5.88 with criteria, the difference was nonetheless significant. Here,  $t = 2.690$  with 283 degrees of freedom.

### Discussion

Two major sets of implications arise from the above results—the first macroscopic, and the second microscopic. In terms of the overall patterns, three observations might be made. First, the results indicated that the proportions of comments in categories follow similar patterns on the two types of ballots, and they do so for each event. Second, impromptu speaking continues to be judged as extemporaneous speaking if the analysis of critic comments provides any indication. In fact, the correlation between the two events increased on criteria-ballots, although criteria were introduced that clearly instructed the critic to stress supporting material more in extemporaneous speaking. Third, for each event, the overall total number of comments to students declined significantly, although the ballots clearly instructed the critic also use the space on the back of the ballots.

In terms of the specific categories, the average numbers of comments per ballot declined significantly in generally positive, specific analysis, delivery, and time allocation categories when criteria were introduced on extemporaneous ballots. Although the declines were perhaps expected in that "time allocation" and "generally positive" were deliberately omitted from the criteria ballots, the significant declines in specific analysis and delivery occurred despite their being stressed in the criteria or extemporaneous speaking. The category

results were equally perplexing in impromptu speaking. The number of comments on "introduction" did decline substantially with the term if not the concept being omitted from the criteria impromptu ballot. Nonetheless, the average number of comments per ballot in "supporting material" increased significantly for this event, despite each ballot stressing that it was "extemp," not "impromptu," that called for more supporting material. "Creativity" never really appeared as a category, as one might expect if that category on the criteria impromptu ballot affected judge-comment behavior. Finally, it is essential to note that in six of ten categories of extemporaneous comments and that in eight of ten categories of impromptu comments, there was no significant difference between the comments made on criteria and non-criteria ballots.

Both the general and specific patterns of judge-comments indicate that in this study, the use of criteria on ballots neither changed significantly the nature of the material judges wrote on ballots nor brought about a differentiation between comments made on extemporaneous and impromptu ballots. Rather, the proportions of comments in categories followed similar patterns on the two types of ballots in each event. The few differences noted by the significant t-scores seemed to result from factors other than the criteria, since the changes did not in each case occur in the direction expected from what was stressed on the ballot-criteria. From these results, criteria as used in the present study would appear to be of limited use either for encouraging more effective judge feedback or for encouraging ballot feedback that differentiates between the objectives of the two events.

Olson and Wells' (1988) study found that judges were making fewer comments per ballot than those in other studies. Their finding should come as no surprise since the Olson and Wells sample contained large numbers of ballots from the Interstate Oratory contest and American Forensic Association's National Individual Events Tournament. Both of these tournaments used miniature "card-type" ballots with very limited writing space. The present study's finding that judges made fewer comments per ballot on the criteria ballots would appear to confirm the implied earlier finding that when given less space to write, critics will provide less feedback to the students, even when urged to write on the back of the ballots.

#### **Implications for Research and Practice**

Bormann (1980) has defined special theories as "style specific formulations which relate to the communication practices of communities clearly bounded by patterns of general usage" (p. 4). For an example of such a theory, he notes that "a typical textbook on public speaking provides an artistic special theory of communication that is concerned

with a group of communication episodes characteristic of set occasions in contemporary North American culture" (p. 4). Clearly, theories about the judging of extemporaneous and impromptu speaking fit into the category of special theory as defined by Bormann—in fact, they are even more "special" in the context of the competitive forensics tournament.

Most critics at tournaments, who are experts in these texts, should be quite familiar with the "style specific artistic formulations." Even inexperienced judges should be familiar with the rules of public speaking. Critics, therefore, usually write ballots according to accepted criteria without the criteria being provided for the critics. Thus, the results of the present study indicating that the specialized critics of limited preparation events ignore what they perceive to be needless criteria, are *not* so surprising. These results would appear to call into question the conclusions reached at the 1988 Denver Conference calling for criteria-laden ballots as a solution to insufficient critic feedback.

The present study's findings should be interpreted with several limitations in mind. First, they left unanswered the possibility that in future study, the criteria ballots might appear in an 8 1/2" X 14" size in order to eliminate writing space as an intervening variable. Second, the scope of the study excluded the possibilities that judge training in the criteria might promote a difference in feedback. Third, since each tournament avoided students speaking twice in front of the same judge in an event, the study is limited in that different judges were used in each round. Fourth, each tournament offered debate. Thus, perhaps the judge pools at all three tournaments had perhaps more persons with debate background than do tournaments offering only individual events. While the precise impact of these limitations on the results remains uncertain, future ballot analyses should look for ways whereby they may be avoided without compromising the authenticity of examining real critic behaviors at real tournaments.

Several quantitative and qualitative questions remain for future research: Is there a need to differentiate between impromptu and extemporaneous judging criteria? If so, how can this difference be achieved in the comments received by students? Why do critics choose to ignore criteria in writing? Are critics' notions of effective extemporaneous and impromptu speaking so ingrained that any criteria or training would be ineffectual in terms of affecting feedback? Do criteria on ballots help put the apprehension of the lay critic to rest, or would a separate handout or workshop work better? Do criteria make a difference when accompanied by judge training? Will different criteria forms than the ones used in the present study yield different results? Do criteria ballots where space is left between each criterion work differently

than the ones in the present study? Finally, how do ranks received relate to positive and negative comments made to the speakers in these categories? While this study has shown what judges are teaching about, speech coaches still need to explore the relationship of positive and negative comments to behavior, and whether those comments are consistent with the ranks given.

Whether judges and speech coaches agree with competition philosophically, it has become an important part of the forensic endeavor. As long as they *compete* at tournaments, students will examine closely their ballots. Thus, the ballot may become *the* pedagogical tool for the speech coach. Ballot-criteria are often offered as means whereby ballots can guide judges to be more consistent teachers. The present study, however, has shown that in and of themselves, criteria on ballots bring about little if any difference in the types of comments critics make to students in the limited preparation events, and that printing criteria on ballots actually decreases the total average number of constructive comments per ballot critics offer students. Because of the continued need to promote criticism of students that is event-specific, instructive, and consistent, ballot analysis should continue in the areas of extemporaneous and impromptu contest speaking. Since comments are read by students more closely than criteria are read by critics, knowing what written feedback appears on ballots and being critical of the consequences will continue to be an important research prerogative for those interested in improving the learning experience enjoyed by competitors.

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**APPENDIX I-Noncriteria Sample Ballot, Used in Both Events**

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**Individual Events Ballot**

Event \_\_\_\_\_ Round \_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_ Room

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Code

Please write voluminous constructive comments to the speaker in the space below:

Rank (1-5, no ties) \_\_\_\_\_ Judge

Rating (100-70) \_\_\_\_\_ School

**APPENDIX II-Extemporaneous Speaking Ballot Sample  
with Criteria**

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**Extemporaneous Speaking Ballot**

Contestant \_\_\_\_\_ Round \_\_\_\_\_

School Code Number \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_

Topic \_\_\_\_\_ Room \_\_\_\_\_

Note to Judge: Please rank each contestant from 1 to 5, with no ties except for fifth place. Please rate each contestant from 70 to 100.

Criteria: Please judge the speaker on the following criteria:

1. Topic and goal—Was the topic selection appropriate? Did the speaker take a clear stand on the issue?
2. Organization—The student should provide a clear and meaningful structure, with logical development.
3. Support—The student should exhibit a strong knowledge of current events by strongly backing claims about the topic assigned with evidence. Sources should be cited.
4. Specific Analysis—The student should effectively and critically explain the facts relevant to the topic.
5. Delivery—The student should show ability to think on his or her feet, with delivery enhancing the student's ideas.

Supporting material and the ability to demonstrate critical awareness of current affairs are essential to this event. This event is distinguished from impromptu speaking, where general interest discussion is stressed.

Comments: (use back of ballot if needed)

Rank (1-5, no ties but 5) \_\_ Judge \_

Rating (100-70) \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX III- Impromptu Speaking Ballot Sample With Criteria****Impromptu Speaking Ballot**

Contestant \_\_\_\_\_ Round \_\_\_\_\_

School Code Number \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_

Topic \_\_\_\_\_ Room \_\_\_\_\_

Note to Judge: Please rank each contestant from 1 to 5, with no ties except for fifth place. Please rate each contestant from 70 to 100.

Criteria: Please judge the speaker on the following criteria:

1. Clarity in Thesis—The student should develop a clear goal for the speech, with a purpose clearly determined.
2. Organization—The student should develop a clear and meaningful structure, with logical development.
3. Creativity—The student should support the points he or she makes with creative examples.
4. Language—The speaker should demonstrate a command of language and style, showing an ability to think with language.
5. Delivery—The speaker should show ability to think on his or her feet, with delivery enhancing the student's ideas.

Creative ideas and a clear, enjoyable, and enlightening discussion of general interest ideas are essential to this event. Impromptu is not mini-extemp, since it does not require cited evidence or a special understanding of current events.

Comments: (use back of ballot if needed)

Rank (1-5, no ties but 5) \_\_ Judge \_

Rating (100-70) \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

## *SPECIAL TOPIC*

### Why Forensic Coaches Quit: A Replication and Extension

*Mary Gill\**

One frequently hears that the life expectancy of a forensic coach is six years. Even though coaches and directors are the individuals making this statement, the idea of such a limited time involvement should cause concern. Juxtaposed to this statement is the frequent mention of the nature of forensic education today. Many believe that time, travel, and competition demands cause coaches to burn out quickly.

While some would like to believe that the nature of forensics has dramatically changed, much literature suggests that the concerns of today have been the same concerns of yesterday. In 1974 the National Development Conference on Forensics, known as the Sedalia Conference, authored a document stating the goals and objectives of forensic education; in 1984, the second conference was held. At each of these conferences, directors of forensics, administrators, and concerned individuals gathered to discuss the nature of forensic education and to plan how to guarantee its success for the future (Ziegelmueller, 1984). Among the concerns addressed were the nature of the activities, competitive standards, judging issues, and ethical concerns.

While these works are familiar to most forensic coaches, few may realize that the debate over what forensic activities should provide for students and demand of coaches and students dates much earlier than the 1970s. For example, Lillywhite (1950) argued that the competitive standards emerging with forensic practices focused away from the educational value of the events and on the individual "star" performer. Quimby (1963) similarly questioned the value of considering directing forensics to be a profession, since a profession presumed a broad intellectual education and specialized training. He argued, however, that forensic practices had evolved into an elitist society and should not be considered a profession. Rives and Klopff (1965) later postulated a decline in positive regard for forensic activities and sought to discover why debate coaches quit.

Despite the earlier debates, individuals involved with forensic education today continue to consider its merits. Frequent grumblings are heard over the demands of the job, the nature of competition and its

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educational value, budgetary concerns, ethical standards, and staffing problems (Attaway, 1977; Friedley, 1983; Thomas & Hart, 1983; Ulrich, 1984; Ziegelmueller & Parson, 1984, Ballinger & Brand, 1987; Aden & Kay, 1988).

Given that questions remain, the present study, representing a partial replication and extension of Rives and Klopff's (1965) study, attempts to determine the concerns associated with the life of a forensic coach. Specifically, this paper addresses the leading issues in the life of a forensic coach, attempts to discover the major reasons why forensic coaches are not satisfied with the profession, and speculates on the areas of concern for the future.

### **Issues Facing Forensic Coaches**

Despite focus differences among debate and individual events, both areas face similar concerns. McBath (1984) established that forensics is an educational activity concerned with examining problems and communicating with people. Clearly, whether one is a debate or individual events coach, consideration of the activity's educational merit remains constant.

Forensic coaches are concerned with several similar key issues regardless of the area of the country in which they coach. Numerous articles have appeared in such journals as *The National Forensic Journal* and have discussed various issues concerning coaches. For example, articles have appeared discussing the educational value of the activities (Ballinger & Brand, 1987; Aden & Kay, 1988). Apparently, educational value is important in considering the merit of forensics.

Closely related to the educational value of forensic education is the concern over ethical standards employed within forensics (Friedley, 1983; Thomas & Hart, 1983; Madsen, 1984; Ulrich, 1984). Madsen, for example, argues that several ethical approaches may be used. Coaches may see that a Quintillion approach—"a good man [sic] speaking well"—is most appropriate. Others may view the confines of the events offered or the program as the end unto itself. Finally, one may view participation in forensics as a training program for valuable skills applicable beyond the immediate competitive setting.

Competitive standards have also received substantial attention (Keefe, 1985; Rasmuson, 1985). For example, Rasmuson concluded that positive attributes are observable regarding competitiveness, but that more research needs to consider whether the effects of the current competitiveness is primarily positive or negative. Thus, competitiveness is not inherently evil; the threshold of when it becomes harmful, however, has not been investigated.

While the literature establishes several key issues concerning the forensic community, other factors are also important in considering the satisfaction experienced by coaches. For example, many coaches are heard lamenting the long hours spent coaching with little time for anything else, the tiresome travel, the lack of support by colleagues on their campuses, the lack of training or preparation to be a coach, and meager compensation for their efforts. While some may argue that these concerns are less weighty than concerns over ethics or competitiveness, the issues of time and travel demands, support and compensation, and preparation for the profession may likely be the concerns that are more fundamentally considered when one considers his or her satisfaction with coaching. Walsh (1983) concluded that these issues warrant serious attention if forensic programs are to survive and grow.

Faced with similar situations occurring in the 1960s, Rives and Klopff (1965) attempted to discover reasons why debate coaches quit. In their survey of college speech department chairs, forensic directors, and National Forensic League chapter sponsors, key reasons were established. While several areas were represented, the responses may be grouped into the following categories: time, workload, travel demands, levels of compensation, preparation for coaching, non-recognition and support, competitiveness, and ethical concerns. In an attempt to replicate and extend Rives and Klopff's (1965) study, this study was undertaken to determine if similar reasons account for why coaches quit or are dissatisfied with forensic education at the college level. As a result, the following research question was posed: What factors account for coaching satisfaction among individual events and debate coaches at the college level?

### **Methodology**

#### **Design**

The experiment consisted of a correlational analysis of eight predictor variables (time, training, travel, workload, compensation, support, competition, and ethics) with the dependent measure being satisfaction. Based on the results of a Pearson correlation, a stepwise regression analysis was performed to determine the strength of the predictors.

#### **Subjects**

The membership of the American Forensic Association (AFA) was subdivided into members who were actively involved with forensic programs at the high school level and at the college level. Since the aim of the study was to examine coaches' satisfaction with coaching, current graduate student coaches were omitted from the list. It was postulated that beginning graduate student coaches would not have the experience

with which to assess adequately the reasons why coaches were or were not satisfied or why they might quit. The remaining members involved at the college level were assigned a number. From this designation, a stratified random sample of 100 college members was selected. Seventy-three usable surveys were returned, representing a 73% response rate.

### **Materials**

A survey which asked coaches to respond to 36 statements about current forensic practices affecting coaches was designed. Subjects were asked to respond to each statement using a Likert-type scale ranging from "1," representing strong disagreement, to "5," representing strong agreement.

Statements for the survey were devised based on Rives and Klopff's (1965) findings of why coaches quit. Only those areas of relevance to the college coach were included in the survey. Areas of concern which have been modified from the time of Rives and Klopff's (1965) study were also taken into account. Categories that emerged as the leading areas of concern for why coaches quit were concerns over time, training, travel, workload, compensation, support other than pay, competitive standards, and ethical standards. Measures of these categories were applied to satisfaction as the dependent variable.

### **Scale Assessments**

A Cronbach's Alpha was calculated for each of the nine scales. Four scale items made up each of the variables. With the exception of the statements regarding training and workload, the items were collapsed across the four statements to arrive at a reliability coefficient. The following reliabilities were obtained: time = .75, training = .29, travel = .53, workload = .58, and satisfaction = .55.

Further investigation into possible reasons for the rather low reliabilities was conducted.<sup>1</sup> The analysis performed on the scales representing training and workload revealed that for each category the statements did not correlate significantly to one another such that larger reliability coefficients did not emerge. Subjects did not view all of the statements in a similar manner. The scale items that did not correlate were eliminated from further analysis. Five items were eliminated in this process, and the remaining 31 items were grouped according to the nine categories outlined by Rives and Klopff's (1965) study.

## **Results**

### **Demographic Analysis**

Respondents were asked to identify certain demographic information. For example, respondents were asked to identify their sex, number

of years coaching, primary areas of coaching, type of school employed at, and tenure status. Of the 73 surveys returned, the majority of respondents were tenured males who were working in a public four-year institution, had been coaching for more than fifteen years, and coached either all individuals events or debate. The results of the demographic analysis are reported in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
**Demographic Analysis**

Characteristic	Number Responding
Sex	
Male	53
Female	20
Years Coaching	
0-5 years	7
6-10 years	16
11-15 years	19
More than 16 years	31
Areas Coached	
Interpretive events	5
Prepared public address	5
Equal coaching all events	13
Debate	46
Do not actively coach	4
Type of school	
Junior college	7
Private four year	22
Public four year	41
Other	3
Tenured Position	
Number tenured	44
Number in tenure line	60

### Correlational Analysis

The scale items for time demands, travel demands, competition, and workload were coded to reflect the appropriate negative relationship to the statements about satisfaction. For example, one statement about satisfaction read, "Coaching is the most rewarding profession." A response of 5, indicating strong agreement, meant coaching was regarded positively. On the other hand, statements about time demands, travel demands, competition, and workload were worded in such a way as to indicate that if subjects responded with a 5, they perceived these items to be a negative element associated with coaching. As a result, negative perception statements were recorded.

A Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was calculated for each scale item and group. As can be seen in Table 2, four categories signifi-

cantly correlated with satisfaction. The time coaching demands, travel concerns, training concerns, and competition were significantly correlated with satisfaction. Time demands, travel demands, and competition were negatively correlated while training was positively correlated. As the time and travel demands, and competitive standards increase, satisfaction decreases. With training, however, as it increases, so does satisfaction. Support, ethics, compensation, and workload did not significantly correlate with satisfaction.

**Table 2**

*Zero-Order correlations Among Variables*  
Independent Measures Satisfaction

Time	-.36**
Travel	-.28**
Training	.34**
Competition	-.26*
Support	.09
Ethics	.14
Compensation	-.10
Workload	-.04

*Note.* Statements for time, travel, competition and workload were coded to reflect the negative relationship of these statements to the wording of the satisfaction statements.

\* $p < .05$

\*\* $p < .01$

### Regression Analysis

The data was submitted to a stepwise regression analysis to identify predictors of coaching satisfaction. The order of entry into the equation was based on the results of the correlational analysis. Time as a variable of coaching was a significant predictor of satisfaction, accounting for 11 percent of the variance ( $Beta = -.281$ ,  $t = -1.98$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $r^2_{adj} = .11$ ). The time required to coach forensic activities was perceived as the variable which predicted satisfaction with coaching. As the time is viewed to be excessive, satisfaction decreases. Travel ( $Beta = -.04$ ,  $t = -.46$ , n.s.), training ( $Beta = .22$ ,  $f = 1.74$ , n.s.), competition ( $Beta = .14$ ,  $t = 1.06$ , n.s.), support ( $Beta = -.07$ ,  $t = -.50$ , n.s.), ethics ( $Beta = -.03$ ,  $t = -.26$ , n.s.), compensation ( $Beta = -.09$ ,  $t = -.79$ , n.s.), and workload ( $Beta = .131$ ,  $t = 1.07$ , n.s.) were not significant predictors of a coach's satisfaction. Low scale reliabilities may have accounted for travel, training, and competition not emerging as significant predictors of satisfaction despite their significant correlation with satisfaction.

## Discussion

This study investigated what factors affect satisfaction among forensic coaches. Overall, the time spent predicts satisfaction with coaching. In general, these findings suggest that time is the most important reason why coaches quit forensic education.

This finding is particularly interesting given the information published in forensic journals. As discussed earlier, much has been written about competitiveness, the educational value, and ethics. These variables, however, do not appear to be as important as the time required in determining whether a coach will remain a coach. Thus, greater attention should be devoted to ascertaining the threshold of what is an acceptable time demand. While this will certainly vary among individuals, identifying of a generalized zone of reasonable time demands may aid in establishing guidelines for several of the other variables addressed in this study. For example, time may have been viewed as the most significant predictor since it supercedes a discussion of competitive standards or the educational value of forensics. After one has determined the time that should reasonably be expected from a coach, these other issues may become a matter for concern.

Although not significant predictors for satisfaction, travel, training, and competition were significantly correlated with satisfaction. These results indicate several important considerations. First, considerations of travel demands, training needs, and competitiveness, are operationalized differently for individuals. Thus, while this study has determined that travel, training, and competition are significantly correlated to satisfaction, the level at which each of these variables is viewed as positive or negative remains a mystery. Further investigation should examine at which level the travel demands, concerns over the amount of training received, and competitiveness creates a negative environment. Through this discovery we would have a better understanding of our success in reaching the educational objectives of forensic education.

Second, as discussed earlier, much of the literature has focused on concerns over ethics. While this is certainly an important issue, ethics emerged as a lesser concern than the time demands associated with coaching. Ethics, for example, debated frequently and at length first by the American Forensic Association and in later years by the Cross Examination Debate Association, does not seem to be a significant concern among coaches when considering satisfaction with coaching. Thus, while ethics may be an important issue to the forensic community, it has little impact on coaching satisfaction. Apparently, sufficient discussion over ethics has occurred, resulting in a lesser need to

focus on ethics and a greater need to address the more pragmatic elements of coaching. This standard is exemplified in the importance of time demands, travel concerns, training issues, and competitiveness. Whether for the individual responding or for what is observed around him or her, training was significantly correlated to coaching satisfaction. Thus, it appears that lack of adequate training will result in a shorter time spent coaching. As with a number of variables affecting the life of a coach, training may manifest itself in other variables. For example, lack of training may significantly impact on the time required to coach, since the coach may spend a substantial portion of time developing skills and knowledge of the events.

Competitiveness is perhaps the most interesting finding of this study. While the data does not support that competitive standards predict a coach's satisfaction, competitiveness is significantly correlated with a coach's satisfaction. When considering the plethora of information printed in the journals offering new and better ways to become more competitive (Geisler, 1985; Dreibelbis & Redman, 1987; Reynolds & Fay, 1987; Swarts, 1988), the finding that competitiveness is significantly correlated with, although not a predictor of, satisfaction would suggest that much of this discussion may not aid the struggling coach. Indeed, coaches find competitiveness to be a reason to question their involvement in forensic education, as Attaway (1977) and Quimby (1963) have suggested, then a continuation of journals devoting portions of their space to how to be more competitive or achieve a higher standard of competition seems self defeating.

While workload, support, competition, and ethics were not significantly correlated with satisfaction, they warrant mentioning. Surprisingly, although time demands were significantly correlated with satisfaction, workload was not. The statements identifying workload specifically addressed the teaching demands in addition to coaching, paperwork involved, and exhaustion which may occur. Apparently, the work is not viewed as excessive or as decreasing satisfaction. Further investigation to explore the relationship between time demands and workload may help determine the appropriate threshold of time involvement in coaching.

Encouraging for every coach are the results examining support and satisfaction. Support addressed the cooperation and appreciation from colleagues both inside and outside of departments. Although important for morale, subjects did not perceive a general lack of support from departmental and campus colleagues.

Similar to support is the issue of compensation. One statement specifically addressed whether subjects believed they were sufficiently compensated for the work they do. This item did not significantly corre-

late with satisfaction. The remaining items addressed the issue of whether forensic coaches should be treated similarly to athletic coaches. Subjects' responses indicated that they do not believe forensic coaches should be compensated in the same manner as athletic coaches.

Ethics was the final variable which did not significantly correlate with satisfaction. The statements reflecting ethics were direct statements regarding ethical practices. Respondents did not indicate a statistically significant concern over ethical conditions. This finding is surprising given the time devoted to discussions on ethics. Given that the Cross Examination Debate Association has been most recently engaged in numerous discussions on ethics, a sample drawn from this population may yield different results.

Although none would argue that the nine categories are important to coaches, time demands was the only variable found to be a significant predictor of a coach's satisfaction. Further investigation into the level at which this variable and other variables impact on coaching should be conducted. It appears that the pragmatic concerns of coaching are more immediately important to coaches.

### **Conclusion**

This study represents an attempt to determine why coaches quit in the 1980s by examining what contributes to their satisfaction. From its findings, those most involved in forensics should be more concerned with the pragmatic practices of day-to-day living as a coach and less concerned with variables such as ethics and competitiveness. Further investigation should focus on the level of acceptable time and travel demands. Additional investigation into the lifestyle of a forensic coach should also be sought, such as an investigation which focuses on ways by which this lifestyle can be made more sustaining than the anticipated six-year maximum.

### **NOTES**

<sup>1</sup>Further analysis was performed on all scale items. With the exception of the five items deleted representing training and workload, no other items were deleted. Eliminating other items did not significantly alter the reliability coefficients emerging during the original analysis. In many cases, two of four scale items significantly correlated with each other. This result may indicate that today's coach makes finer distinctions among items regarding support, for example, than the coaches studied by Rives and Klopff. Further investigation and refinement of these items should be done to develop more reliable scales for future studies.

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## *FORENSIC FORUM*

### **Some Questions About Questions in Contest Rhetorical Criticism: A Response to Levasseur and Dean**

*Timothy L. Sellnow and C. T. Hanson \**

The debate over whether or not to include a questioning period in contest rhetorical criticism is as old as the event itself. While some argue that such questions "serve a viable educational purpose" (Levasseur & Dean, 1989, p. 151), others insist that the questioning period often results in a "forensic horror story" (O'Rourke, 1985, p. 165) for competitors. Since the national Forensic Association voted to remove the questioning period at its Individual Events Nationals, this debate has intensified. Those who supported the questioning period view the decision to discontinue it as a threat to the educational objective of the event. Those who endorsed dropping the questioning period insist that it was no longer serving as a valuable asset to the event. Although we agree that good questions can contribute to the learning experience in contest rhetorical criticism, we do not believe that the educational value of the event has been weakened by eliminating the questioning period. In the following paragraphs, we address some of the speculations about the impact of eliminating the questioning period. We discuss the role of questions in the general context of education, and in the specific process of training young critics. Finally, suggestions for future experimentation are offered.

#### **Questions and Education**

Initially, we suggest that the process of "questioning" students during a round of competition, regardless of the event, is amoral. In other words, oral questioning can serve a positive end or a negative end. When used appropriately, questions might serve a positive purpose. When used inappropriately, they might serve a negative purpose. In this portion of our essay, we offer two observations from an educational perspective. First, we argue that oral questions can and have served a negative purpose by creating an atmosphere of unhealthy anxiety for competitors. Second, we reject the claim made by Levasseur and Dean (1989) that oral questions are "better suited for rhetorical criticism than any other individual event" (p. 154).

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### **Threatening Atmosphere**

It is important to note that we agree with Levasseur and Dean (1989) when they reject the argument that questions should be eliminated because they "impede tournament timing" (p. 153). The matter of tournament administration is irrelevant to the legitimacy or illegitimacy of questions. Tournament managers can arbitrarily schedule fewer speakers in rounds of rhetorical criticism if they wish to accommodate questioning periods. Our concern is that oral questions as they have been used in contest rhetorical criticism have created a threatening atmosphere for students.

The questioning period, as it was used at the Individual Events Nationals, allowed each judge to ask one question. The nature of these questions, however, varied greatly among judges. Unfortunately, the questioning period was abused by many judges. Reynolds (1985) describes the discomfort such abuse can pose for contestants when she states, "The question-answer session is more often than not a grueling, defensive experience for competitors when it should be both positive and constructive" (p. 174). Carl Rogers (1983) cautions us to consider the possible negative consequences for the student [contestant] when the teacher [judge] governs the communication situation by placing the student in a "state of fear." In the case of oral questions during contest rhetorical criticism, students are threatened with "public criticism and ridicule" and "the fear of failure" (p. 186). Even more disturbing is Rogers' claim that "this state of fear appears to increase as we go up the educational ladder because the student has more to lose" (p. 186). If questions in contest rhetorical criticism produce such anxiety, why do some students ask that they be continued? Perhaps the "personal satisfaction" of having "beaten a pompous judge," as described by O'Rourke (1985, p. 166) actually serves to motivate veterans of contest rhetorical criticism to advocate the continued use of questions. Still, the question remains: How many students have quit competing in or avoided contest rhetorical criticism altogether because they felt threatened by the questioning period? If students turn away from the event because of the questioning period, what educational purpose are the questions serving?

### **Diverse Applications**

Levasseur and Dean (1989) suggest that, because contest rhetorical criticism asks "for so much in so short a time," it is the individual event best suited for questions (p. 154). We agree that contest rhetorical criticism is a demanding event. We contend, however, that the demands of the other individual events are such that they are equally worthy of having question periods. For example, in oral interpretation

events, students are asked to unravel a plot and develop characters within ten minutes. Similarly, public speaking events require contestants to create a sense of understanding or develop a set of adequate arguments for accepting a controversial position on a public issue within the same ten minute time limit. We agree with Manchester (1985) when he states, "The forensic community must embrace the notion that *all* national events are unique and sufficiently complex to challenge the student's [*sic*] development as communicators (p. 172). Simply put, the topics of the rhetorical criticism event are not necessarily any more extensive than those of other events. All events require the use of a critical perspective.

### **Questions and the Training of Young Critics**

Levasseur and Dean (1989) claim that the question period serves to "encourage more knowledgeable rhetorical critics" (p. 152) and that without the encouragement of questions, "students will cease to possess such knowledge" (p. 153). They consider the argument that students will continue to conduct research about their artifact and method, beyond what is necessary to write the speech, to be rooted in "idealism" (p. 153). We contend that such student research is not idealistic. We argue instead that it is a realistic and essential component in the process of training young critics. Specifically, we contend that describing such research as idealism fails to recognize the vital elements of motivation, reasoning, and responsibility in the process of teaching students the art of rhetorical criticism. The elements are described in the following paragraphs.

#### **Motivation**

Andrews (1989) explains that the initial step towards training students to be effective rhetorical critics is to develop in them a "wise skepticism" (p. 178). He explains that, by developing this skepticism, students will become "better consumers and producers of communication" (p. 183). Andrews' observations are consistent with those of Brock, Scott, and Chesebro (1990), who claim that criticism is fostered by observations of circumstances which "cry out for explanations." They label this human need to evaluate and understand our world, "the critical impulse" (p. 10). Contest rhetorical criticism affords students the opportunity to apply formally their critical impulses to messages they believe are in need of explanation. Thus, contest rhetorical criticism is a formal means of helping students to perfect their critical impulses. It is the critical impulse which should motivate students to explore both the theories and the circumstances surrounding the rhetorical artifact or act which has made them curious. If oral questions are substituted for the critical impulse, the educational value of the event is suspect.

Therefore, it is our position that a genuine curiosity on the part of the students toward the communication they analyze is a real and necessary ingredient for test criticism.

### **Reasoning**

An additional aspect to be considered concerns the act of reasoning in criticism. Foss (1989) contends that rhetorical training helps students to "become inquisitive about the symbol use around them—to make habitual the asking of questions about the nature and functions of symbols" (p. 191). To meet this goal, Foss advocates a question-asking approach on the part of the rhetorical critic. Such an approach is fitting with the previous discussion of wise skepticism and the critical impulse. Students begin and develop their rhetorical criticisms by forming questions. The reasoning process within a contest rhetorical criticism is manifested in the questions and related answers generated by the student. Hence, the process of rhetorical criticism itself is a process of asking and answering questions. These questions should be developed as the students direct their critical impulses toward the rhetorical artifacts or acts they select for analysis. Why, then, would the quality of a student's analysis be diminished if a judge does not ask oral questions following a performance? Such outside questions may, if asked appropriately, encourage students to alter their presentation for future contests. They should not, however, serve as the driving force behind the research efforts of the student. At best, these questions serve only to supplement the continuous questioning carried out by the students themselves. Further, when contest rhetorical criticisms foster questions for judges which are not answered in the speeches, judges can articulate such questions on their ballots. Simply put, we see no unique advantage to verbalizing such questions at the conclusions of competitors' presentations.

### **Responsibility**

A third aspect of training the critic concerns the teaching responsibility of the coach. Gronbeck (1989) offers a demanding goal for the teacher of young rhetorical critics. He states "Rhetorical training is education for life" (p. 189). Gronbeck insists that, as educators of young rhetorical critics, we should strive to improve their abilities to describe, contextualize, and make judgments about the messages around them. He insists that the true means by which we should evaluate our success or failure in training young critics is through the observation of the "reasoned personal and collective judgments" our students make throughout their lives as they are confronted with socio-political situations (p. 189). Coaches of rhetorical criticism can make a major contribution to this goal. To do so, coaches need to engage in

thought-provoking dialogue with their students. Such conversations should, at the very least, begin when the student identifies an item for analysis, and continue throughout the season of competition. Coaches diminish the significance of such dialogue when they limit it to strategic conversations about potential questions from judges. This limited scope fails to emphasize the importance of applying such concepts to the students' life experiences. If coaches are willing to meet the responsibility of giving their students "education for life," the questioning period is not necessary. Conversely, coaches who are not willing to accept this responsibility and, instead, strategically train their students to "beat" the questions judges might ask, fail to meet the educational objective of contest rhetorical criticism.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

In 1985, Denise Gorsline addressed the abuse of questions in contest rhetorical criticism by stating, "We can change our behaviors or we can change the product" (p. 167). In 1989, the NFA decided to change the product by eliminating the question period. The NFA has not discouraged, and we contend that it should not discourage, the continued experimentation with questions in all individual events. It is, in fact, our hope that forensic educators will continue to experiment with question periods in all of the individual events. When conducting such research, however, we might all do well to review what Pamela J. Cooper (1988) has written on the process of questioning students in the educational setting, as well as what she has to say about the expectations we communicate when we make use of questions (pp. 124-146; 247-259). In essence, Cooper suggests that questions can add to or detract from the educational growth of the student either by fostering interest or by creating a hostile environment for the student. We believe that perfecting the use of question periods in forensic competition is a worthy challenge.

Well-planned questions asked by conscientious judges can supplement the educational objective of contest rhetorical criticism. The membership of the NFA have, however, found sufficient reason to discontinue their use. While this is a disappointment to some and a victory for others, we remain convinced that the educational value of contest rhetorical criticism has not been diminished.

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## **The Question in Rhetorical Criticism: A Response to Levasseur and Dean**

*Keith D. Green and Larry Schnoor\**

In the Fall, 1989, issue of the *National Forensic Journal*, David Levasseur and Kevin Dean presented arguments in favor of the use of the question in Rhetorical Criticism. The arguments presented identified important reasons why questioning was valuable; however, equally important arguments as to the disadvantages of questions were omitted. To provide for a balanced discussion of the use of questions at hand, this essay will offer support for the opposing position: that the return of the questioning period to Rhetorical Criticism is simply unwarranted. To arrive at this conclusion, two avenues will be explored: 1) an overview of the controversy at hand will be presented to establish perspective and to set parameters for the argument; and 2) an argument supporting the removal of the question will be advanced.

To begin, there are two factors vital in understanding the scope and importance of this issue. First, it is important that we remember that the concern over the use of questioning in Rhetorical Criticism is an Individual Events National Tournament issue only. The action taken at Upsala in April, 1989, has no regulatory authority in the operation of any tournament anywhere else in the country. There are those who might argue that since NFA has removed questioning from the event, individual directors of forensics will now remove questioning from their respective invitational tournaments. This is most certainly a possibility; however, invitationals traditionally offer rules, formats, and events different from those used at the national level. Thus, any argument about impact on invitations is moot; these are tournament host decisions. We must keep the argument in perspective; and we are talking about one tournament only.

Moreover, we suggest that invitational tournaments are the more appropriate place for the use of the question, if it is to be used at all. By the time of the national tournament, rhetorical criticism should have been evaluated sufficiently to provide answers to questions raised during the year. Also, since one purpose of questioning is to stimulate students to consider revisions in their criticisms, we wonder how many criticisms are actually revised after the national tournament is ended.

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A second aspect of this controversy which is crucial to achieving perspective is the understanding that each of us may argue a position based on different value hierarchies. We can certainly all agree that the concept of questioning students has educational value; however, for these authors, tournament operation and event equity is of higher value. This is in no way intended to demean the value of posing a question to a student. Rather, it is an attempt to balance educational value with fairness and tournament pragmatics. The importance of this issue is that the conflict is not over the value of questioning, *per se*, but it is over questioning *balanced with* other tournament concerns. Thus, the value of the question should not be the focus, but rather the relative merit of its use when weighed against other variables. With this overview in mind, we can develop a more precise discussion of the reasons supporting the removal of questions from student competition, and we will show that questioning in rhetorical criticism does not achieve a healthy balance with other concerns of forensic competition.

From a tournament administration perspective, we can't deny that the use of questions increases the amount of time needed to complete each round of competition. As all tournament managers know, being able to anticipate the length of a given round is vital to effective tournament operation. Without this ability, the scheduling of judges, rooms, students, and the entire tournament becomes increasingly difficult. Dr. Christina Reynolds, Executive Secretary of the National Forensic Association and Tournament Manager, reported that removing the question period from each round of competition has increased the effectiveness of tournament operations (1990). Given the size and complexity of IE Nationals, actions which decrease the complexity of operating the tournament must be valued highly and given careful consideration.

Second, from a fairness perspective, there are two concerns. Since the use of questioning had been at the discretion of judges in the round, it is a feature which is unevenly applied in each event. Not all judges asked questions; and if they did, many did not ask questions of all contestants. Thus, judges' uneven application of questioning may actually have created inequities in the round itself. Those students being questioned had that additional time to clarify, in some way, their positions; those students left unquestioned did not.

Furthermore, even if judges did choose to employ the question, the danger of abuse existed. As Harris asserted, "Not only are tournament schedules totally devastated by such practices, but the renown of rhetorical criticism finds as a model for the 'Inquisition' quickly turn novices away from an important educational experience" (1987, p. 24). Although idealistically all judges treat students with tact and consider-

ation, to assert that such abuse did not occur would be hiding one's head in the sand. To sanction this avenue for abuse certainly seems inconsistent with strong educational goals.

Additionally, the presence of questioning was inconsistent with other events; not, as Levasseur and Dean assert, establishing a false dichotomy (p. 153), but rather, the equitable application of tournament procedures to all events. Rules of events such as time limits are established, among other reasons, to encourage fairness in the structure of the event itself. Since questioning was unevenly applied by judges, the structure of the event allowed for inequities rather than guaranteed fairness.

Third, from an educational perspective, it appears that questions taught students that lack of clarity and completeness within a given time-frame was acceptable. This stance is certainly contrary to basic, effective public address. Virtually any textbook on speech preparation will stipulate that the final product must fit within the given time-frame. Use of the question suggested that time limits could be "fudged" a bit, and that the rhetorical effort might be completed after the fact. Levasseur and Dean assert, "A complete and concise rhetorical criticism is impossible within a ten-minute time-frame. *"At least with questions, judges can compensate for the time limit and explore areas which the student simply could not address"* (p. 154). If students cannot address these areas within the speech, to allow them to be addressed after the fact violates the basic parameter of "fitting the time limit."

Finally, the entire issue of the question is highlighting a symptom of an underlying problem in Rhetorical Criticism: we as coaches/judges may be demanding too much to be accomplished in the ten-minute time-frame. As Levasseur and Dean acknowledge in their essay, "In no other event do we ask for so much in so short a time...." In short, we ideally expect a twenty-five page journal article condensed into a ten-minute insightful and invigorating presentation" (p. 154). By utilizing questioning in order to mitigate these extreme expectations, the NFA community was, in effect, endorsing a poorly defined event. As Harris argued in 1987, there is "a major problem with the event—its lack of definition in the minds of forensic judges, coaches, and students" (p. 21). If questioning were still in effect, the symptom (lack of clarity) might be treated, but the disease (too much material) would still be present. Rather than utilize questioning as a stop-gap measure, "the forensic community [should] develop a clear statement of rhetorical criticism as a competitive event" (Harris, 1987, p. 24). This redefinition must provide for allowing students to satisfy judges' demands for information within the ten-minute time limit.

In balance, the educational value of the question to rhetorical criticism, when compared to tournament administration concerns, fairness concerns, and other education concerns, falls well short of justifying its re-introduction to the event. The value of questions in any forensic event is obvious; however, when weighed against other factors, its use is not warranted.

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## *INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES*

### **Using Court Cases on Freedom of Speech Issues in the College Classroom**

*Sandra Hochel\**

In this assignment, abstracts of court cases are used to provide an exercise in exposition in a public speaking course. The abstracts can obviously be used for many other purposes. For example, I have used them as an argumentation exercise having students take opposing sides. In this article, I will present a less obvious use that I find particularly valuable for students.

**PRIMARY PURPOSE:** To provide a public speaking exercise which requires students to present specific and detailed information in an organized and clear manner.

**SECONDARY PURPOSE:** To provide information about free speech issues.

In this assignment all students are given a description—minus the court's decision—of an actual court case dealing with a free speech issue. (Each student gets a different court case.) Students are instructed to assume the role of a judge on the court which must render a decision. Their assignment is to give a short speech (2-4 minutes) to their classmates in which they discuss in their own words the circumstances of the case, give the decision they would make, and explain the reasons for their decision. Since no out-of-class research is required, this exercise can be assigned as an impromptu or an extemporaneous speech, depending on class size and available time. (See Appendices I and II for the cases and decisions.)

Many students, especially beginning public speaking students, need help in learning how to present specific details in an orderly and clear way. I find this exercise can provide such help, particularly if it is used after a class discussion on message organization and language clarity. Many students find the assignment more difficult than expected. Explaining the cases clearly and accurately requires more skill than they may at first realize, since the abstracts contain much information in a short amount of space. Audiences frequently get lost in the details. I find it helpful to audio tape this exercise and have students listen to their speeches and ask such questions as:

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- Did I present the material in an orderly manner?
- Did I have a clear thesis statement?
- Did I separate the major issue from the details?
- Did I restate or repeat important information?
- Did I use any previews?
- Did I use any summaries?
- Did I use any signposts?
- Did I leave out any important details?
- Did I vocally stress the most important material?

After all speeches, the class and I discuss reasons why some cases were easy and some were difficult to follow.

In some way, all cases concern issues of free speech and First Amendment rights, and all cases provide students with information on the responsibilities and limits of free speech. Thus the assignment not only gives students a needed speaking opportunity, but also provides information on a topic related to the course. There are two additional advantages: 1) students are particularly involved and interested in the assignment because of the case study format, and 2) many speakers are less nervous for this speech than for other short speeches due to the structured format and high interest factors.

Suggested instructions and format are given below.

1. Prior to the speeches, explain to the class that they will have an assignment based on court cases dealing with free speech issues. Put the First Amendment on the board and explain that the word "speech" has been interpreted by the courts to apply to many forms of expression such as movies, songs, and demonstrations. Briefly explore some of the obvious restrictions on free speech (e.g., shouting fire in a crowded theatre and threatening the life of the President), so the class will see that the First Amendment right of free speech is not an unlimited guarantee.

2. Give each student a different court case. The case can be distributed on the day of the assignment or on the day before the assignment.

3. Give the students instructions such as the following:

You have been given a brief summary of an actual court case. You have the facts of the case, but not the final decision of the judges. I will give you that at the end of the class. Today you are to assume you are the judge. You are to explain in your own words the case to your classmates and discuss the decision you would make and the reasons for that decision. Under absolutely no circumstances may you read the case description to the class. Your assignment is to tell us about the case so that we can understand it and the decision you would make.

4. Announce any time limits you have.

5. If the cases are not distributed prior to the day of the speeches, give the students approximately ten minutes to study the case abstracts before the speeches begin.

6. After all speeches, review the court decisions, but point out to the students that if they disagreed with the court ruling, they are not necessarily wrong. They simply did not agree with the opinions of the majority of judges on a particular court.

7. As time permits, discuss limits on free speech, particularly libel and slander, violations of the right to privacy, obscenity, defamation of private persons, and use of language to incite violence.

8. End with a discussion of reasons why some descriptions were easy to follow and why some were unclear, mentioning the use of such techniques as previews, internal summaries, repetition, and signposts.

9. If desired, use a follow-up assignment such as the audio-taping analysis mentioned earlier.

### SUMMARY OF COURT CASES

NOTE: I abstracted court cases which were either recent controversial ones or older landmark cases. I avoided complex cases and well known ones that I thought might be known to students. If you need more cases for a class, I suggest you consult the official record of the U.S. Supreme Court, *United States Reports: Cases Adjudged in the Supreme Court*. I also recommend *Freedom of Speech in the United States* by Thomas Tedford (New York: Random House, 1985) and *Law of Mass Communication* by Nelson, Teeter, and LeDuc (New York: The Foundation Press, 1989).

1. The Italian film *The Miracle* was approved and licensed by the New York Board of Regents for distribution in New York state. After distribution, there were public protests against the release of the film because the protesters believed the film was sacrilegious. The film was directed by Roberto Rossellini, who is internationally acclaimed for his movies. In the movie, a simple peasant woman becomes pregnant by a stranger whom she believes to be St. Joseph. The woman is ridiculed and tormented by the local villages when she tells them that her pregnancy is a miracle sent by God. She hides in a cave to escape her tormentors, and later she sneaks back into the village to the church where she gives birth to her illegitimate child. Fourteen months after the license to distribute the film was given, it was withdrawn by the State of New York because of the charge that the film was sacrilegious. The decision was appealed, challenging the right of the state to censor films on religious ground and claiming that the First Amendment protection of freedom of speech (expression) was violated. The lower court upheld the decision of the state. The case then went to the Supreme Court. Assume you are a judge on this court. How would you vote? Explain in

your own words the above situation to your classmates and discuss the decision you would make and the reasons for it.

2. In 1974, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* printed a story on the impact of the deaths of the 32 people killed when the Silver Bridge across the Ohio River collapsed. The impact of the death of Melvin Cantrell, who was a husband and father, was particularly highlighted. A reporter and photographer visited the Cantrell home, conducted interviews with the Cantrell children, and took photographs in the absence of Mrs. Cantrell. The story emphasized the family's poverty and contained photographs of the family's poor living conditions. The article falsely claimed that the mother was present when the interviews were conducted and the pictures taken. Mrs. Cantrell sued for damages, maintaining that the article contained false statements and made her family subject to ridicule and pity. This caused family members to be humiliated and mentally distressed. *Die Cleveland Plain Dealer* (Forest City Publishing Company) maintained that the subject matter was in the public interest, that they had not deliberately misinformed the public, and that they were protected by the First Amendment. The lower court awarded damages to the Cantrells. The Publishing Company then appealed to the Supreme Court. Assume that you are a judge on this court. How would you vote? Explain in your own words the above situation to your classmates and discuss the decision you would make and the reasons for it.

3. A large privately-owned shopping center had a policy not to permit anyone to circulate petitions to the public in the shopping center. This policy was strictly enforced. Some local high school students sought to get signatures on a petition opposing a certain United Nations' action. On a Saturday, these students set up a card table in the courtyard of the shopping center. They passed out pamphlets and asked shoppers to sign petitions. Before long, a security guard informed them of the regulation against circulating petitions and told them they would have to leave. The guard told them that they could set up their table on the public sidewalk at the edge of the shopping center. The students immediately left the shopping center and later filed suit against the owners of the shopping center for denying access to the center and for limiting their right of free speech. A state court held that the students were not guaranteed the right to petition in the shopping center and that there were other effective ways for them to circulate their petitions. The students appealed this decision. The next higher court reversed the lower court's decision, pointing out that the State Constitution specifically protects the right to "speech and petitioning, reasonably exercised, in shopping centers even when the centers are privately owned." The owner of the shopping center now appealed this decision, arguing that his property rights were being violated. As a private prop-

erty owner, he had the right to set certain regulations that he believed to be in the best interest of his business. He argued that he should not be forced to have his property used as a forum for the petitions of others. Assume you are a judge on the Supreme Court. How would you vote? Do the students have the right to petition in the shopping center? Explain in your own words the above situation to your classmates, and discuss the decision you would make and the reasons for it.

4. Albert Glines was a captain in the Air Force Reserves. While on active duty at an Air Force base, he wrote some petitions to several members of congress and to the Secretary of Defense, complaining about the Air Force's grooming standards and asking that they be changed. Captain Glines knew about the policy that required him to obtain the approval of his commander before he could collect signatures on the petition on the Air Force base. Glines, at first, circulated the petition off base. However, later, he gave the petition to a sergeant while on base and without seeking permission to circulate the petition. The sergeant gathered eight signatures on the petition before military authorities seized the petition. Glines' commander immediately removed him from active duty for his part in the unauthorized petition. Glines brought suit, claiming that the regulation requiring approval before circulating petitions violated his constitutional right to free speech. The Air Force contended that the regulation requiring permission was not intended to suppress free speech, but was needed to maintain a respect for duty and discipline which are vital in the operation of the military. The Air Force pointed out that regulations prohibit commanders from stopping circulation of petitions that merely criticize the Air Force or the government. But, they argued, commanders must have the right to approve petitions so they could stop any that could adversely affect the troops' ability to carry out their duties. Assume you are the judge. Does this regulation violate Captain Glines' right to free speech? Explain in your own words the above situation to your classmates and discuss the decision you would make and the reason for it.

5. Frank Snepp was an agent for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) who was in Vietnam for several years. After he quit working for the CIA, Snepp wrote a book about CIA activities in Vietnam. Snepp did not submit his writings to the CIA approval before the book was published, as he was supposed to do. When agents are hired by the CIA, they have to sign an agreement promising that they will not publish any material about the CIA even after their employment ends without the approval of the CIA. This promise is obtained from all agents primarily to be sure no classified material will be revealed. There was no doubt that Snepp broke his agreement with the CIA since he did not submit his book for approval before it was published. After Snepp's book was published, the CIA brought a suit against Snepp asking for a declara-

tion that Snepp had broken his agreement and for an order requiring Snepp to submit any future writing for approval. The CIA also asked that Snepp not receive any profits from the sale of the book, and that all profits go to the government. The District Court agreed with the CIA. Snepp protested, pointing out that even the government agreed that his book contained no classified information. Snepp appealed to the Supreme Court. Assume you are a judge on the Supreme Court. How would you vote? Why? Explain in your own words the above situation to your classmates and discuss the decision you would make and the reasons for it.

6. A journalist, Farber, wrote numerous articles about some "suspicious" deaths at a certain hospital and suggested that these deaths were a result of misuse of drugs. As a result of the articles, a grand jury investigated the matter and charged a doctor working at the hospital with murder. When the doctor came to trial, the journalist was subpoenaed (required by the judge) to bring to the court for inspection all of the notes and records he obtained while writing the articles. Farber refused because, he maintained, he was protected against disclosing the information under the First Amendment guarantee of freedom of the press. The judge disagreed and said he would have to examine all the documents to see if they were protected against disclosure. The journalist argued that he had received certain information only because he told his sources they would remain anonymous. Farber contended that if journalists can be made to reveal their sources, they are restricted in the information they can receive, and freedom of speech and the press is restricted. Opponents argued that the career and life of the man on trial for murder was at stake, and one's obligation to appear at a criminal trial and provide evidence was not protected by the First Amendment. Farber refused to turn the requested material over to the court, and he was declared in contempt of court. He was ordered to be jailed until he turned over the papers. He appealed this contempt citation. Assume you are the judge. Should Farber be made to turn over his notes to the court? Explain the above situation in your own words to your classmates and discuss the decision you would make and the reasons for it.

7. A state police official and three federal agents searched the home of Robert Stanley. They had a search warrant and had cause to believe Mr. Stanley was involved in illegal gambling activities. The search did not yield any records of gambling operations, but three reels of film and a projector were found. The searchers watched some of the film and judged them to be obscene. Mr. Stanley was then charged with possession of obscene material. Mr. Stanley argued that he had a right of privacy to have this material in his own home and that the First Amendment protection meant that the state could not tell him what he

could watch in the privacy of his home. He was not showing the material in public and was not sending it through the mail. The law enforcement officials argued that the material was "hardcore pornography" which was illegal to make or sell in the United States. If Mr. Stanley had the films in his home, then he must have received the material from somewhere else. Assume you were the judge. Does Mr. Stanley have the right to have what the court considers obscene material in his home? Explain in your own words the above situation to your classmates and discuss the decision you would make and the reasons for it.

8. A local television station was doing a story on some restaurants that were cited for health-code violations. As part of the story, a camera crew—with lights on and cameras rolling—went into a public and famous restaurant in the area. Their arrival was unannounced. As they filmed the customers dining in the restaurant, there was much confusion and dismay. Reportedly, many customers did not wish to be seen on film for various reasons (such as being with a person other than their spouses). The restaurant owners sued the television station for invading their privacy and for trespassing. They did not know the television crew was coming and did not give them permission. The television station owners maintained that the restaurant was a public place and that if you can see something in a public place, you can photograph it. Assume you are the judge. Should the restaurant owners win the suit? Explain in your own words the above situation to your classmates and discuss the decision you would make and the reasons for it.

9. Several anti-Vietnam War activists blocked the entrance to an army recruitment center in Atlanta, Georgia, in order to disrupt the recruiting efforts. When the police came to clear the entrance and physically remove the activists, one of the protestors, Jerry Wilson, cursed the police. For example, he said to one of the officers, "You son of a bitch, if you ever put your hands on me again, I'll cut you up in pieces!" A scuffle broke out, and the protesters were arrested. Because of the language that Jerry Wilson used, he was charged with violating a Georgia law providing that any "person who shall, without provocation, use to or of another, and in his presence... abusive language, tending to cause a breach of the peace . . . shall be guilty of a misdemeanor." Wilson was tried and convicted. He appealed his conviction on the grounds that the law was unconstitutional, since it violated his right of free speech. The state of Georgia maintained that a legitimate restraint of free speech was when abusive language is used in a face-to-face confrontation to incite physical violence. On appeal, the U.S. District Court and the Court of Appeals overruled the lower court on the grounds that the state law was too vague and violated First Amendment rights. Wilson's conviction was overturned. The case then went to the Supreme Court. Assume you are a judge on this court. Explain in your

own words the above situation to your classmates and discuss the decision you would make and the reasons for it.

10. Paramount Pictures produced and distributed the film, *The Warriors*, which is about New York City youth gangs. The film includes violent scenes involving guns, knives, and other weapons. Michael Barrett and two friends sat through two showings of *The Warriors* at the Saxon Theatre in Boston. According to court records, Barrett was under the influence of drugs and alcohol when he saw the movie. After the movie, Barrett and two friends took a subway ride home and encountered members of a rival youth gang. A fight broke out and Barrett stabbed and killed Martin Yakubowicz, a member of the rival gang. The father of the dead boy sued Paramount Pictures and the Saxon Theatre for the wrongful death of his son. He argued that Paramount was negligent in producing and distributing a film which could cause viewers to commit violence. He alleged that Paramount and Saxon were negligent in showing the film after learning that violent incidences had followed the showing of the film in other cities. Paramount and Saxon contended that imposing liabilities on them for showing the film would violate the First Amendment's guarantee of free speech (expression). They alleged that the movie depicted—not advocated—violent action and thus should be protected by the First Amendment. The lower court ruled that Paramount and the Saxon Theatre were not responsible for the death of Martin Yakubowicz. The father appealed to the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court for review. Assume you are a judge on this court. Explain in your own words the above situation to your classmates and discuss the decision you would make and the reasons for it.

11. Some students at Charles Lindbergh High School produced an off-campus newspaper, *Bad Astra*, which contained political poetry and articles. The newspaper claimed no school sponsorship or endorsement, and was funded exclusively by the students involved. After five students distributed the publication during a senior class barbecue, they were reprimanded for distributing a non-school-sponsored publication. School policy required students to submit material for prior approval. The students contended that since the *Bad Astra* was a non-school-sponsored publication receiving no school funding, they should not have been required to submit the material. To make them submit, they argued, would deny their First Amendment right of free speech. The principal of the high school disagreed and maintained that "not everyone has a right to distribute anything they want." He argued, "We're dealing with students who consider themselves 'skin heads, punks, heavy metalers,' you name it. We should be permitted to censor materials distributed during the school day, on school grounds." The case went to the U.S. Court of Appeals. Assume you are a judge on this

court. Explain in your own words the above situation to your classmates and discuss the decision you would make and the reasons for it.

12. Paul Ferber, the owner of a Manhattan bookstore which specialized in sexually oriented material, was convicted of disseminating child pornography and was sentenced to 45 days in prison. A 1977 New York law prohibited the production and/or distribution of sexually explicit films or photographs involving children in live "sexual performances" even if the performances were not legally obscene. Ferber appealed his conviction, arguing the law in question was unconstitutional because it was too broad and could be used to deny the sale and promotion of material which should be protected by the First Amendment (e.g. photographs in medical books and educational sources). On first appeal, Ferber's conviction was upheld, but the New York Court of Appeals agreed that the New York law under which Ferber was convicted was too sweeping and could be used to deny First Amendment rights. This case was appealed to the Supreme Court. Assume you are a judge on this court. Explain in your own words the above case and discuss the decision you would make and the reasons for it.

13. Marvin Miller mailed five unsolicited brochures to a restaurant manager. The manager opened the material and was surprised to discover the brochures which advertised books the manager considered obscene (e.g., *An Illustrated History of Pornography* and *Sex Orgies Illustrated*). Not only did the brochures advertise pornographic books, but the manager considered the illustrated and graphic brochures to be obscene as well. He complained to the police, and Marvin Miller was charged and convicted for distributing sexually explicit material in violation of California law. Several appeals followed, and then the case was taken to the Supreme Court. Miller argued that the brochures were not obscene just because they contained sexually explicit material.

He contended that he was exercising his First Amendment rights, was advertising a legal product, and that the state law defining obscenity was too restrictive. The state of California argued that it had the right to define obscenity according to "contemporary community standards" and that it also had a right to prohibit the mailing of unsolicited obscene material. Assume you are a judge on the Supreme Court. Explain in your own words the above situation to your classmates and discuss the decision you would make and the reasons for it.

14. A newspaper ran a story on Mafia activities on Grand Bahama Island, alleging that Americans who were part of the Mafia were illegally involved in the gambling operations on the island. Included with the story was a photograph of a group of people gambling at one of the casinos. A Mr. James Holmes was in the center of this photograph and was easily recognizable even though he was not named. The caption under the photograph referred to "High Rollers" at the casino and con-

tained the information that the casino had a profit of \$20 million a year, with a third "skimmed off for American mafia 'families.'" Since Mr. Holmes was in no way connected with the Mafia and since he had not given his permission to have his picture taken, he sued the newspaper for libel, that is, for damaging his reputation. Holmes contended that the photograph, caption, and accompanying story implied that he was involved with the Mafia. The newspaper argued that the caption only labeled the people in the picture as gamblers at the casino (no names were used) and that the caption did not imply that he was part of the Mafia. Assume you are a judge. Was Mr. Holmes libeled by the newspaper? Explain in your own words the above situation to your classmates and discuss the decision you would make and the reasons for it.

15. A Boston magazine published an article titled, "Best and Worst Sports," which contained a listing of the best and worst in many sports related categories such as "sports announcers," "local ski slopes," and "sexy athletes." Under "sports announcers," the best was named and complimented. Then this statement appeared: "Worst, Jimmy Myers, Channel 4. The only newscaster in town who is enrolled in a course for remedial speaking." Myers sued for defamation (an attack on his reputation). He pointed out that the article stated that he "is enrolled" in a remedial speech course, which was not true. By stating this as a fact, the magazine had hurt his reputation as a sports announcer. The magazine owners maintained that the article was written in jest and that readers understood that exaggerations were part of the article. Cartoons, humor, and outlandish statements were used throughout the article, and the owners contended that readers would know that what was written was not presented as fact. They argued that to deny them the right of humorous exaggeration and satire would limit their First Amendment right of free speech. Myers sued and lost for failure to establish defamation. He appealed to the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court. Assume you are a judge on this court. Should Myers win the case? Explain in your own words the above situation to your classmates and discuss the decision you would make and the reasons for it.

16. William Sidis was a mathematical genius who graduated from Harvard at sixteen and received a great deal of local and national publicity. Twenty years after his graduation from Harvard, a magazine ran a story about Sidis and other people who were touted as being geniuses as children. The article contained a cartoon with the caption "Where Are They Now?" and "April Fool." The article related how Sidis now lived in a shabby rented apartment, worked in a routine clerical job, and as a hobby studied the history of American Indians. Sidis sued the magazine for invasion of privacy and asked for monetary damages. The magazine owners maintained that Sidis was a public figure and, as such, they had the right to write about his life. No false information was in the article.

Was Sidis deprived of his right to privacy? Did the magazine have the First Amendment right to publish such an article? Assume you are a judge. How would you vote? Explain in your own words the above situation to your classmates and discuss the decision you would make and the reasons for it.

17. Mr. and Mrs. Ginsberg owned and managed a magazine shop. One day, a mother sent her sixteen-year-old son to the shop to buy two "girlie" magazines similar to *Playboy* and *Hustler*. The boy was allowed to purchase the magazines and walked out of the shop. He was stopped by the police, and the Ginsbergs were charged with willfully selling to a minor. A state law prohibited selling to anyone under 17 any pictures which contained nudity. Both magazines contained pictures of women in the nude. (Under state law, it was permissible to sell the magazines to persons 17 years of age or older, and the Supreme Court previously ruled that the magazines were not obscene.) The Ginsbergs were convicted of selling obscene material to a minor and appealed their case. They claimed that if material was not obscene for adults, they should not be made obscene for minors. Should minors be treated differently under the law? Assume you are the judge. How would you vote? Why? Explain in your own words the above situation to your classmates and discuss the decision you would make and the reasons for it.

18. During the Vietnam War, Julian Bond, a black civil rights leader in Georgia, was elected to the Georgia House of Representatives. After his election, but before the House session began, Bond publicly endorsed an anti-War Statement made by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. The statement was: "We are in sympathy with, and support, the men in this country who are unwilling to respond to a military draft." In supporting the statement, Bond explained that he was a pacifist who opposed any war and that he was "eager . . . to encourage people not to participate in it." Because of this public endorsement, the Georgia House of Representatives voted not to seat Bond. (This would effectively deny him his membership in the House.) The House members contended that since it was unlawful to refuse or evade the draft, Bond was encouraging men to violate the law and was giving "aid and comfort to the enemies of the United States." Bond argued that the Georgia House was denying his First Amendment right of free speech, and took the issue to court. The case eventually reached the U.S. Supreme Court. Assume you are a judge on this court. What decision would you make? Explain in your own words the above situation and discuss the decision you would make and the reason for it.

19. In 1960, a group of civil rights leaders placed a full-page "editorial advertisement" in *the New York Times*. The ad recounted the efforts of black students in the South who were struggling for equal rights and specifically cited the misconduct of the police in Montgomery,

Alabama. This ad prompted L.B. Sullivan, Commissioner of Public Affairs in Montgomery whose duties included supervising the police department, to file a suit against the New York Times. Sullivan, who was not mentioned by name in the ad, claimed that it defamed him (i.e., that it hurt his reputation) and that the ad contained false allegations. Sullivan was able to prove some statements in the ad were false. For example, the ad claimed students at a college protest rally sang "My Country, Tis of Thee" when they sang the National Anthem. The ad claimed student expulsion had been protested by the entire student body when only a large part of it protested. The manager of the *Times* Advertising Department admitted he had not checked all the facts in the ad for accuracy because he had no reason to believe them false. The ad was signed by 64 people—most were well-known and respected persons. The local and state court agreed with Sullivan and awarded him half a million dollars in damages. The case then went to the Supreme Court. Assume you are a member of this court. What decision would you make? Explain in your own words the above situation, the decision you would make, and the reasons for that decision.

20. The state of West Virginia had a law requiring all children in the public schools to salute and pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States. Some children who were members of the religion called Jehovah's Witnesses refused to salute or say the pledge. Their parents had urged them to take this action. They explained that their religion prohibited them from pledging allegiance to anyone but God. They argued that they had a First Amendment right of free speech and religion to express their views by not pledging allegiance to the U.S. flag. The state maintained that the words to the pledge do not imply that one is giving allegiance to this country over God, but merely that one will be a loyal citizen and not work to overthrow the U.S. government. The case ultimately ended in the U.S. Supreme Court. Assume you are a judge on this court. How would you vote? Explain in your own words the above situation, the decision you would make, and the reasons for that decision.

### THE DECISIONS

1. The Supreme Court voted to reverse New York's ban on the showing of *The Miracle*, ruling that states could not censor a communication on the grounds of blasphemy. *Burstyn v. Wilson*, *U.S. Reports*, Volume 343 (1952), p. 495.
2. The court upheld the lower court ruling. The family received damages, since the court ruled that the newspaper staff was aware of the falsehoods in the story. *Cantrell v. Forest City Publishing Co.*, *U.S. Reports*, Volume 419 (1974), p. 245.

3. The Supreme Court ruled that the students should have the right to petition in the shopping center. *Pruneyard Shopping Center et al. v. Robins.*, *U.S. Reports*, Volume 447 (1979), p. 74.
4. The Supreme Court ruled that the regulation was not in violation of the constitutional right of free speech. *Brown, Secretary of Defense, et al. v. Glines*, *U.S. reports*, Volume 444 (1979), p. 348.
5. The Supreme Court upheld the decision of the District Court in favor of the CIA. *Snepp v. United States*, *U. S. Reports*, Volume 444 (1979), p. 507.
6. The New Jersey Supreme Court ruled that Farber was not protected by the First Amendment in this case and the contempt citation was upheld. The Governor of New Jersey eventually pardoned Farber, and he was released from jail. In re Farber, as cited in Nelson, Teeter and LeDuc, pp. 400-402.
7. The court ruled that Mr. Stanley did have the constitutional right of privacy to have this material in his home. *Stanley v. Georgia*, *U.S. Reports*, Volume 394 (1968), p. 557.
8. The court ruled that the television station crew had invaded the privacy of those in the restaurant and that a restaurant was not a public place. *Le Mistral, Inc. v. Columbia Broadcasting System*, as cited in Nelson, Teeter, and LeDuc, p. 251.
9. The U.S. Supreme Court agreed with the lower court that the Georgia law was unconstitutional because it was so broad that it could be used to limit free expression protected by the Constitution. *Gooding v. Wilson*, *U.S. Reports*, Volume 405 (1972), p. 518.
10. Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruled that Paramount and Saxon were not negligent and were exercising their First Amendment rights to produce and show the movie which did not encourage or directly incite others to commit violent acts. *Yakubowicz v. Paramount Pictures* in *The News Media and the Law*, Fall 1989, pp. 33-34.
11. The court ruled in favor of the students, maintaining that since the newspaper was an "underground" publication, it was not within the purview of the school's exercise of reasonable editorial control. *Burch v. Barker*, as cited in *Student Press Law and Center Report*, Spring 1989, Vol. X, No. 2, p. 5.
12. The court upheld the state law prohibiting the production or dissemination of child pornography even if the material in question is not legally obscene. The court ruled that child pornography is outside the protection of the constitution. *New York v. Ferber*, *U.S. Reports*, Volume 458 (1982), p. 747.

13. The court upheld Miller's conviction, noting that sexually explicit material should not be thrust upon unwilling recipients. *Miller v. California*, *U.S. Reports*, Volume 413 (1973), p. 2607.
14. The court ruled that the newspaper was guilty of libel. Mr. Holmes received damages since his reputation had been damaged by the newspaper's misleading caption. *Holmes v. Curtis Pub. Co.*, as cited in Nelson, Teeter, and LeDuc, *Law of Mass Communication* (New York: Foundation Press, 1989), p. 113.
15. The court ruled that the article was not defamatory, since the statements made about Myers "would not reasonably be understood by a reader to be an assertion of fact." *Myers v. Boston Magazine*, as cited in Nelson, Teeter, and LeDuc, pp. 117-118.
16. The U.S. Court of Appeals held that Sidis could not collect damages. Sidis had been a "public figure," and his right to privacy had not been violated. *Sidis v. F-R Pub. Corp.*, as cited in Nelson, Teeter, and LeDuc, p. 277.
17. The Supreme Court upheld Ginsberg's conviction. States have a right to treat minors in a more restricted manner than adults. *Ginsberg v. New York*, *U.S. Reports*, Volume 390 (1967), p. 629.
18. The Court ruled that Bond's right of free speech had been violated, and ordered him seated in the Georgia House. *Bond v. Floyd*, *U.S. Reports*, Volume 385 (1966), p. 116.
19. The Court ruled in favor of *The New York Times*, noting that erroneous statements are inevitable in free debate. The commissioner was a public figure acting in an official capacity and, as such, should not collect damages unless he could prove the "statement was made with actual malice, that is, with the knowledge that it was false or with reckless disregard of whether it was false or not." *New York Times Co. v. Sullivan*, *U.S. Reports*, Volume 376 (1964), p. 254.
20. The Court ruled against the state of West Virginia, striking down the law requiring the pledge of allegiance. *West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette*, *U.S. Reports*, Volume 319 (1943), p. 624.

## *REVIEW OF PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES*

*Jack Kay, Editor*

Bartanen, Michael D., and David A. Frank. **DEBATING VALUES**. Scottsdale, AZ: Gorsuch Scarisbrick, Publishers (1991).

Amidst a market of excellent debate textbooks is one of the newest additions to the field by Michael Bartanen and David Frank entitled **DEBATING VALUES**. While there are other texts that deal with value debate, either in whole or part, this paperback of 240 pages clearly addresses a need in the field of academic debate. Bartanen and Frank offer a comprehensible, theoretically-grounded, and pragmatically-developed introduction to the nature and practiced of values debate.

The authors are to be commended for assuming a philosophical orientation to debate that firmly grounds debate in its proper and worthy context as a **rhetorical** activity. It is true that most debate textbooks make reference to debate as a rhetorical tradition, but this particular text does far more than offer a historical reference. Throughout their text, Bartanen and Frank accord a substantive rhetorical foundation to debate that it (in principle) richly deserves, but is often overlooked or understated. In this rhetorical context, Bartanen and Frank note in their preface, "We think debate ought to be 'audience-centered'; it ought to stress good communication skills and teach students to adapt to different kinds of audiences." (p. vii)

**DEBATING VALUES** contains ten chapters grouped into three sections. According to the preface, Chapters 1 through 4 establish the nature and foundation of debating values through a groundwork of theory. In the next section, Chapters 5 through 7, apply and relate these theories to the practice of academic debate. Finally, Chapters 8 through 10 offer a synthesis of theory and practice by focusing on issues and topics that are inherent in competitive academic debate. Each chapter is introduced by a set of chapter objectives and is concluded with a brief summary. In addition to Appendix A (sample debate) and Appendix B (key debate terms), Chapters 3, 4, and 9 each provide their own appendix of critical supplementary materials. Each chapter also contains footnotes that lead readers to further information about the concepts covered.

Overall, this textbook approaches values debating by addressing and blending structural and situational elements of debate, which is another way the authors present a rhetorical perspective of debate. Perhaps the overall strengths of **DEBATING VALUES** can be characterized in four ways: 1) clarity of purpose; 2) ease of understanding; 3) conciseness; and 4) skillful application of theory to practical usage in

competitive academic debate. With these general considerations in mind, specific strengths of the text can now be discussed.

First, chapter 2 presents material concerning speaker duties, issues, and debate formats, all of which are typically covered in debate textbooks. In **DEBATING VALUES**, however, the concepts reflect a decidedly rhetorical perspective which is both innovative and refreshing. For example, Table 2.3 describes Types of Debate Assertions and Claims, which include the following: Initiating, Signifying, Refuting, Questioning, Clarifying, and Refocusing. Although these labels reflect techniques that are not new to teachers/coaches of debate, the discussion of technique combines structural and situational considerations of message content and analysis.

Second, Chapter 3 provides a descriptive examination of competing values and their place within value hierarchies. Specific attention is given to value claims of significance, cause-effect, utility, and principle. Equally important to an understanding of debate is the concept of stock issues. Although primary focus is given to stock issues in values debate, the authors do briefly discuss stock issues in policy debate which offer useful comparative insight. The stock issues applied to values debate are that of definition, criteria, significance, and comparison. At the end of Chapter 3 is a select bibliography of materials related to values theory which would be quite useful to the reader.

Third, Chapters 6 (affirmative) and 7 (negative) offer excellent prescriptive suggestions about developing affirmative and negative positions. Through a focus on structural responsibilities and situational strategies, the text presents a clear and concise step-by-step procedure that is followed in competitive academic values debate. Throughout this chapter, as well as others, simple and direct charts are used to direct the reader to important guidelines, concepts, or directions. The theoretical section on types of negative issues and claims, and practical applications (including a briefed value objection) is particularly noteworthy.

Fourth, Chapter 8 is devoted exclusively to a study of paradigms, both structural and situational. Typically, such a discussion in debate texts is cursory, particularly in reference to values debating. But this chapter offers a very useful examination of how structural paradigms compare debate to some other decision making contexts, while situational paradigms establish strategic choices based on an analysis of context and audience. Once again, values debate is placed clearly into an audience-centered, rhetorical perspective. Structural paradigms discussed are: policy-making, judicial, and issues-agenda. Situational paradigms examined are information-processing, game-playing, and speaking skills.

Fifth, the concept of ethics and ethical behavior is covered in Chapter 10. The approach taken in this chapter is not only interesting, but extremely valuable to any student or coach of debate. The chapter is organized around a series of brief case studies, followed by a discussion of whether or not ethical behavior was violated. Of particular interest are the treatment of ethical attitudes toward others, ethics of fast delivery, and ethics of squirrel cases. This chapter provides a useful clarification of the intent and meaning of ethical behavior and specifies what actions, while perhaps spurious in strategic intent, are not unethical.

In sum, **DEBATING VALUES** by Michael Bartanen and David Frank is an excellent values debate textbook for use as a primary text or a handbook for debaters not enrolled in a debate course. The textbook is thorough, yet concise. And the rhetorical perspective presented is singularly noteworthy.

Valerie R. Swarts  
Slippery Rock University

## *EDITOR'S FORUM*

### **IE Nationals Results: A 20th Anniversary Update**

*Michael D. Leiboff\**

On April 26-30, 1990, the National Forensic Association celebrated the anniversary of its 20th National Championship in Individual Speaking Events. I attempted to compile a history of individual and school achievements at IE Nationals in the Fall, 1987, issue of the *National Forensic Journal*. The 20th Anniversary seems an appropriate time to bring history up to date.

In the school category, Bradley University continued its run by capturing their third consecutive national championship in Open Sweepstakes. Eastern Michigan University upheld their extraordinary record of never finishing below third place in school competition with three consecutive second place finishes.

#### **OPEN SWEEPSTAKES (Top 10 finishes)**

1. EASTERN MICHIGAN ... 20
2. ILLINOIS STATE ..... 14
3. OHIO UNIVERSITY ..... 12
4. MIAMI (OH) UNIV ..... 11
5. BRADLEY UNIV ..... 11

Beginning in 1986, the NFA went to a sweepstakes system that recognized schools on their showing at the National Tournament based on the size of their entry. All schools are eligible for the Open Sweepstakes Division. Since 1987, there has been a noticeable shift in the geographic power of collegiate forensics at the national level. In 1979, there were five Ohio schools in the top ten Open Sweepstakes. Ohio State University and Miami University finished among the top ten schools in 1987; no Ohio schools appear in 1988, and Miami University returned to the top ten schools in 1989 and 1990. While Ohio colleges did place in the entry-limited sweepstakes categories, it appears that the shift of power has moved to the upper midwest.

The significant updates have been in individual achievements. In the IE Nationals since 1987, there have been some very remarkable performances. Kim Roe, of Eastern Michigan University, joined David Bickford, of Brown University, when she won an event for the third

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\**The National Forensic Journal*, VIII (Fall, 1990), pp. 217-219. MICHAEL D. LEIBOFF is Assistant Professor in the Speech Communication Department at Mansfield University in Mansfield, PA 19104.

consecutive year in a row (After Dinner Speaking in 1986, 1987 and 1988).

The small list of repeat champions was increased when Brenda Dempsey, of Eastern Michigan University, won Informative Speaking in 1988 and 1989. Cam Jones, of Cornell University, repeated wins in Impromptu Speaking in 1988 and 1989. Mike Jakoby (Bradley University) won Extemporaneous Speaking in 1988 and 1989, while teammate Sara Braun (Bradley University) won Poetry Interpretation in 1989 and 1990. Finally, Stephanie Kaplan, of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, also repeated by winning Rhetorical Criticism in 1989 and 1990. Jones, Kaplan, Jakoby and Braun were all national finalists in the same event in three separate years. Braun was able to accomplish this feat in both Poetry Interpretation and Duo Interpretation. Cam Jones of Cornell University tied an impressive record at his last national tournament. He placed in five different final rounds at the 1989 National Tournament. Only Kate Joeckel, of the University of Nebraska, and Mike Jones, of Eastern Michigan University, were able to become finalists in five different events. Kaplan became only the fourth contestant, the first since 1979, to win three event championships at one national tournament by winning Rhetorical Criticism, Persuasive Speaking, and Informative Speaking at IE Nationals #20. She joins Brenda Dempsey, of Eastern Michigan University, by placing in the top ten of Pentathlon three consecutive years. Kaplan now joins Greg Dolph, of Bradley University, and Jon Capecci, of Eastern Michigan University, with four national championships. Michael Garcia, of Eastern Michigan University, still leads with five national championships.

#### **CAREER FINALS**

Greg Dolph, Bradley .....	12
John Capecci, E. Michigan .....	11
Theresa McElwee, EMU .....	11
Michael Garcia, EMU .....	9
Stephanie Kaplan, Wis-Mad .....	9
Mike Bailey, EMU .....	8
Mike Jones, EMU .....	8
Sara Braun, Bradley.....	8
Bobbi Rowe, Stetson.....	8
Cam Jones, Cornell .....	8

There have also been some unique results that should be noted. The most recent Nationals at Mankato saw five contestants place in

three or more finals. Kaplan (University of Wisconsin-Madison) placed in four finals, while Braun (Bradley University) was in three finals, as were Joey Callow, (Miami University), Jeff Seasholtz (Eastern Michigan University), and Todd Tesen (Eastern Michigan University). By winning After Dinner Speaking in 1988, Bradley joins Eastern Michigan in having a national champion in every event. Illinois State University comes close, with a champion in six of the nine national events. IE Nationals #20 saw Eastern Michigan end Bradley's hold on Duo Interpretation; Bradley's streak ended at six consecutive wins. Those two schools have won Duo Interpretation thirteen of the nineteen times the event has been held. The most competitive event is a tie between Prose and Impromptu, with fifteen different schools winning in twenty years.

The twenty National Tournaments have given us many outstanding school and individual performances. It will be interesting to see which records will stand and which ones will be broken when the NFA celebrates its 30th anniversary.