Rostrum

SPECIAL EDITION: EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

"TEACHING SPEECH AND DEBATE IS ONE OF THE BEST TREASURES IN MY LIFE. WHAT A PRIVILEDGE IT IS TO WORK WITH THE MINDS THAT WILL CONTROL THE FUTURE."

- Christy Briggs, Reno High School, Nevada

Tips & Tricks

Set up a Remind account & allow parents to join - it's always good for them to know what your communication with their students is & it will keep them up to date.

Let the students show you what they are capable of. Sometimes it's hard to not jump into the trench and start cutting cards with them or to tell them what script to pick, but when you empower them to make those decisions themselves, they WILL rise to the challenge and blow you away with their abilities.

Convince your admin to send you to an NSDA education conference. The resources you gain there are invaluable.

Identify check-in students: these are the students who will gauge the climate in the classroom; they will let you know what adjustments might need to be made.

Ask for PLC time with other speech & debate teachers in your area. We are usually the only person in the building who does this job- we need time with others who do it too.

Create a show-case event that students, parents, admin are invited to. Make sure all stakeholders get the chance to see what your students do all year- show them off! (use it as a fundraiser too)

Get a mentor in the speech/debate community. It helps to know someone has been where you are & can share advice (or just listen) when things get stressful or overwhelming.

Find ways to integrate into other areas of the school. (Can your students judge grad speech tryouts? Can they help student body officers with speeches before elections?)

Avoid putting too much focus on winning. Trophies and awards are great, but the life lessons they learn and the relationships they form are so much more important.

Don't re-create the wheel. Use the resources on the NSDA website. They have so many good resources available both for educators and for students. Seriously, go there now!

Enjoy the amazing opportunities speech/debate brings your way.

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*Disclaimer: This publication was created as a submission for the National Speech & Debate Association's Educator of the Year portfolio. It was intended to be a creative presentation of portfolio materials and is in no way meant to be a parody nor a plagiaristic interpretation of the NSDA's "Rostrum". It will not be produced, printed, or distributed for any cause other than submission to the Educator of the Year committee.

Personal Statement

Teaching speech and debate is like leading a revolution. In a day and age where teenagers are being bombarded with social media, fake news, and a plethora of other things designed to distract them from actually developing their own thoughts, speech and debate is the weapon with which I can arm the future.

I came to teaching speech and debate in a roundabout way. The school needed someone to take over the class, for months they sent emails seeking someone to take it. I already knew that I'd be adding to my class load the next year by taking on the school newspaper. Somewhere along the line, I thought "how hard can it be? I'll already be after school with the journalism kids, it can't hurt to have two groups of students in my classroom after school at the same time." I could not have anticipated then just how much my life would change in the coming years.

Within hours of committing to take over the class, debate students started showing up in my classroom asking if we could all meet to talk about how the next school year would go. Agreeing to that meeting set our future in motion.

Introduction to the cause:

The most pressing thing the students wanted me to know was that they were used to working in small groups that were mostly mentor lead & that major intervention by the teacher wasn't really their thing. Their experience with persuasive speaking was already serving them well. The negotiations about how the class would run commenced. That September, I experienced what is was like to facilitate a revolution; to operate a genuine flipped classroom.

Tools of empowerment:

I see my role as more of a facilitator; there to take care of and organize the logistics. I plan a calendar, but they plan the content that goes on the calendar. On the surface, the class is designed around tournament prep, students meet in alternating speech and debate groups. Digging deeper, leaders of those groups plan specific content for each of those days- in a speech group that might mean a handful of days for cutting a script, some time for memorization, specific lessons designed to explore the characters in the script, lessons to develop blocking, small group presentation days with mentor critiques, etc. Alternately, in a debate group, lessons will focus on case research, case writing, case revisions, practice rounds, debate theory lessons, cross-x practice, etc.

I believe that putting agency into the hands of the students is what has led to the overwhelming success and popularity of the program on our campus.

In the speech and debate classroom, students feel valued as young adults and they feel in control of their environment. They are the true leaders of the revolution.

> **"Teaching speech and debate means empowering students."**

Belonging to the cause:

One of the things I frequently hear students say about the program is that it feels like a family. I attribute the strong bonds they form to the amount of time they spend actually listening to and learning from one another.

Showing students that you trust them breeds an environment where they also trust each other. While speech & debate has a reputation on our campus for being rigorous, it is also has a reputation for becoming a home to anyone who joins the group. The members of the speech & debate class/team demonstrate more concentrated diversity than the school population does. This diversity has allowed many students to learn about people and groups of people they might not come into contact with otherwise. The debate classroom is a place where students of various religions, races, genders, sexual preferences, identities come together. Our shared space is a place for students to be open about who they are. In this place I have worked hard to make sure all students feel valued by me as well as by their classmates. More directly, it allows many myths or perpetuated assumptions to be dispelled and unlearned. These are essential lessons, and they are much more important anything else I could possibly teach the students who enter my classroom.
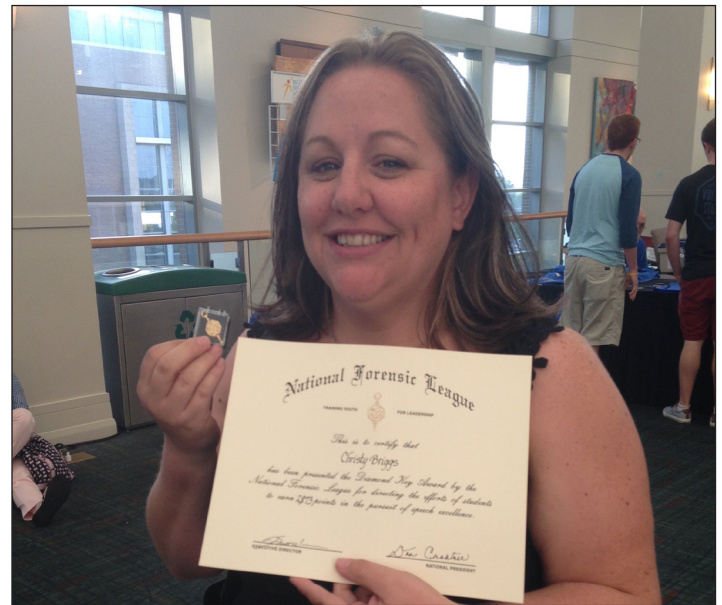
Affirming our values:

It's not just about critical thinking and research- although those skills are equally important. By nature, speech and debate is an activity that causes us to examine things further; in most cases, it asks us to examine the multiple sides of a topic/position and, if one wants to be good at the event, to examine which of our own beliefs may be hindering us from understanding the topics- or more importantly, one another- more completely.

Something we address often in the speech and debate classroom is the

> "One of the most beautiful things speech and debate does is give students a voice."

meaning of civil discourse. People are accepting with alarming ease the notion that they must abandon and eschew those with whom they disagree, rather than learning that we can hold opposing ideologies and still be respectful, or even still be friends.

One of the most beautiful things speech and debate does is give students voice. Voice to profess their religious or philosophic beliefs more fully, voice to stand up for populations that are underrepresented or mistreated, voice to advocate for change in their world.

Results of the revolution:

If students walk away with nothing else from their time in my classroom, I hope that they walk away knowing how to advocate for what they believe in, because they have been given opportunities to explore those beliefs in a safe and encouraging environment. I hope that they will

know what integrity looks like and why it is a fundamental role in their advocacy, because they have seen me lead from the same place of integrity, and watched me advocate for them through this program. I hope that they will remember what it means to firmly assert their convictions while earnestly considering opposing viewpoints, because they have formed friendships with people they disagree with. I hope they will leave knowing they are creative, courageous, and capable of leading the charge to transform the future, because they've already begun to do so.

In the pages that follow, you will see a glimpse of what it's like to be a member of my team, you will see evidence of my belief that teaching speech and debate ought to be revolutionary.

Questions & Answers

The questions that follow were collected from speech & debate educators in my area.

How do you balance coaching such a large and successful team while also teaching English and Journalism?

I have no life. Hahah. Just kidding.

It definitely helps that I do not have children or a family at home waiting for my workday to end.

More specifically, I make a conscious effort to make sure I am putting equal effort into all three of those things. All of my students deserve equal attention.

I have worked hard to make sure that my debate students and newspaper students respect one another & understand that in order to lead both programs, I have to make sacrifices. For example, my debate students know that traveling to tournaments is difficult for us because I am already committed at least one other weekend a month to being at school for newspaper deadline. In the same way, my newspaper kids know that our deadline schedule will often be formed around the debate schedule.

It helps that both groups have benefited from the other: the 13 computers in my room the debate kids rely on for research have been purchased by the journalism program- but the journalism kids are more than willing to share them with the debate kids. Having debate practice in the same place as the newspaper is put together give the journalism students an additional audience to pitch ideas to.

In terms of balancing English into all of that, English is my foundation; it is what got me into the other two activities.

I love the English content I teach and I try to find ways to work journalism & debate into my English units.

Perhaps the saving grace in all of it is colleagues. I love working with other teachers to create units and lessons that are cross-curricular and engaging. Since so many of the debate coaches in my area are also teachers, we spend a lot of time at tournaments talking about our classrooms and content area. I've shared lesson plans and ideas with several coaching friends- we have created unit together

while waiting for rounds to end.

Have you ever had students in class that required special accommodations?

Absolutely. I think sometimes counselors shy away from putting students who need accommodations into speech & debate because the class requires tournament participation- but in the last several years, we've made a stronger push to change the impression that the class is only for Honors/AP students.

In fact, I think we thrive when we have more diversity among the students in the class.

Over the years, I've had several students who broke the mold- and the experiences were epic!

Adjustments are easy to make- exempting tournament participation is an easy fix...though I try to convince all students in my class to attend at least one tournament...because I think the students involved in speech & debate are some of the most accepting and loving students around. The more opportunity I have to expose students to those who they perceive as being unlike them, the better.

I love watching attitudes change when students realize that others truly believe in them & their abilities.

What has been the hardest part of your job so far?

Honestly, making sure the school district sees the importance of speech & debate as part of the curriculum has been the hardest thing.

The admin teams I've had over the 11 years I've been teaching/coaching speech & debate have been incredible at listening to my defense of the program, and I've never felt like I was in danger of losing what we have at my school, however, in those same 11 years I've watched many schools in the area lose the class on their campuses. Some of those schools lost their teams entirely, others were then coached by non-teacher volunteers.

Working to get teacher coaches back on the scene, and being available to share course descriptions, content, class set-up, teaching strategies, has been a huge focus.

Not only do I believe in the program I lead, but I also believe that in

order for my program to function at its best, we need as many other schools in the area to foster the same dynamic programs on their campuses.

What advice would you give to first year teachers/coaches?

Educate your admin! The most valuable thing you can do to keep your program afloat is make sure your administrators see value in your speech/debate program- especially if speech comm isn't a graduation requirement.

Whether your program competes in tournaments or not, speech& debate combines so many important skills to students: research, public speaking, collaboration, etc. Make sure the people deciding what courses will be offered on your campus see how impactful speech & debate is.

Invite admin to observe your classroom. Ask them to stay long enough to see past the chaos and to allow the structure that reveals itself.

How do you recruit for your classes?

I don't. The students in the class tell their friends about it, and get them to join.

I have an open door policy- friends are allowed to hang out after school and watch practices. Many of them ask questions &

the students are more than happy to answer/explain.

This had drawn in more kids that anything else.

Occasionally, current students will plan a day to go to our feeder middle schools and tell incoming freshman about the class and encourage them to sign up for it.

What are your top 5 student success stories from over the years?

It would take too much space to tell about my top 5, but one that stands out the most to me is a student I had named Ryan.

Ryan came into my class his sophomore year. He was very hesitant to attend the first tournament. After much coaxing and encouragement, I told him to at least participate Friday & if he absolutely hated it, he could drop from Sat & look at other class options.

Ryan had a very successful Friday & returned for debate on Sat. where he went on to take 1st place in his event.

The success isn't in the fact that he broke in both of his events, it's that attended the tournament at all. After that, he was hooked.

In his goodbye speech to the class, he told a story about how that tournament changed the course of his life. He was on the heels of some traumatic life events, and he credited my "forcing" him to attend the first in a chain of events that saved his life.

How do you manage such a large team successfully?

Something a former student said that has stuck with me is "It's not that you're mean, it's that you're fair- it doesn't matter if a leader breaks the rules or a novice does, the consequence is the same. You don't play favorites when it comes to meeting expectations or following the rules."

The students on this team know what my expectations are- they are printed in their syllabus each year, we go over them, and we talk about them for classroom behavior and for tournament behavior. I also model the bahavior I expect from them.

When conflict arises in the tab room between coaches, I share vague details with my students and explain how resolution was reached- I think it's important for them to know that their adults are called to act with integrity

as often as the students are.

What do you love most about coaching? Teaching?

I love watching students surprise themselves; I love seeing them overcome barriers and meet success where they thought they couldn't find it.

I love watching other adults react with awe as students gracefully tackle "adult" topics (politics, war, death) with composure, research, and enthusiasm.

I love that I am afforded the opportunity to play a small role in the lives of the people who will soon be running the world I live in.

Perhaps the thing I love the most about teaching/coaching speech & debate, is the same thing my students mention to newcomers each year- this event creates a sense of family among its members. The relationships built through speech & debate are uplifting, fulfilling, and enduring.

Using a Mentor Model

The success this class/team has experienced is all credited to the mentor model we use. In 21st Century terms, this is truly a Flipped Classroom.

When I took over the class, I had zero experience with speech & debate. So, when students approached me and said "this is how we do it" I was (hesitantly) on board.

The class focuses a lot on teaching speech and debate through competition events. Our local league offers 10 speech events and 5 debate events. Students are in 2 speech events and one debate event each.

It would be nearly impossible for one person (me) to teach every single event to all of the students in the class at one time. Not only would they be so tired of listening to me talk, they would have nearly no time to prepare for the events, and even if they did, when entry limits are considered, I could not enter all of my students into the same event at tournaments.

To work around several of these issues, my classroom is flipped and the students lead specialized speech and debate groups the majority of the time.

Putting so much of the instruction time into the hands of students demands that I have a method in place to ensure that each group has quality leaders/mentors.

Throughout the school year, we hold leadership meetings/lunches to talk about struggles the leaders are having in their groups, what each leader or group needs from me, and to reaffirm expectations we have for each other while using this model.

While I see my students daily and could make a judgment call on leadership/mentors based on what I observe throughout the year in class and at tournaments, I like that the application/interview process allows me one more opportunity to give my students experiences that will prepare them for life outside of high school.

The application and interview process also creates a time and space to really talk to students who express a desire to lead & for them to express thoughts or ideas that might not otherwise come into play during a regular class session.

From the students:

"It's a leading factor to why our team has stayed consistent over the years."
Amanda W.

"We get to see what the mentors have accomplished and the hard stuff they had to go through to get there. That's something you don't see with a teacher."
Zoey K.

"There's a different type of motivation that comes with not wanting to disappoint an upperclassman that you look up to; it makes us closer."
Lauren K.

"I like it because it allows experience and knowledge to be passed down."
Chase O.

"What stands out to me is the respect we build for our leaders since the teacher puts so much trust in them."
Meilonai T.

"Teaching events and finding effective ways of improving others' performances has increased my knowledge and ability ten fold because it pushes me out of catering to myself and my opinions and makes me take an objective view on how to improve."
Logan S

"It allows for more one on one time with the leaders and consistent teacher intervention [is there] to correct mistakes and help clarify."
Sophia W.

"The knowledge from past mentors to future mentors keeps the teachings of that group going for years upon years."
Gabe M.

"It establishes the students as the backbone of the speech and debate class."
Aiden P.

Mentor Application

Name _____   Graduating class of _____

years on debate team _____   Position applying for? _____

1. Why do you think you are the best candidate for this leadership position?
   What makes you better than other potential candidates?

2. What has your success record looked like at this event?

3. What do you think are your areas of strength when it comes to this event?

A friend who used to coach in Las Vegas shared the idea of having students apply to leadership positions. After looking at his materials and using materials I'd created for my journalism students, this document developed.

4. What do you think are your areas of weakness when it comes to this event? How will you improve upon them?

5. How will you deal with students in your group that refuse to do work, and constantly unprepared, and are often off-task while in class?

6. Think of a time when you displayed your dedication to prepping in a very brief time frame. Tell me about that situation. Include the answers to the following questions: Why was the deadline so short? How did you approach getting things done? Discuss anything else you feel is important to the situation.

7. What other responsibilities will you take on in the coming school year? List any clubs or organizations, jobs, family responsibilities, volunteering, etc. that will impact the number of hours you will be able to dedicate specifically to speech and debate. Will you have a problem with staying after school until 4pm two days a week?

8. What things worked well this year and what things would you want to change about this leadership position?

Class set-up

On the next page, you can see a calendar of what a year in my speech & debate classroom usually looks like. Since competition is a required part of the class, we spend a lot of time prepping for tournaments, but those activities are mixed with whole group lessons, presentations, and other unit content.

Below is an explanation of each type of activity.

Whole group lessons

At the beginning of each year, there is a lot of whole group lesson content. Most of the time, these lessons focus on the basic elements of speech and debate events.

Whole group debate content includes how to flow, types of arguments, how to use prep time, how to educate judges in the middle of a round, etc.

Whole group speech content focuses on voice projection, eliminating filler words, knowing your timing, making eye contact with the audience, etc.

We also use whole group lessons to focus on trends students see in the league with regard to speech or debate; adding to our toolbox as needed, and correcting errors in interpretations of the rules being perpetuated as "institutional knowledge" among the students.

Speech groups

As expected, speech groups are just that; days when the class breaks into their specific speech events.

The mentors for each group lead those groups for the entirety of the class period. Class activities on these days varies by group and is based on the needs of each individual group.

Leaders take time to evaluate ballots from previous tournaments, they ask their group what elements they'd like to focus on improving, and they critique one another's performances.

The vast majority of time in these groups is spent presenting to one another for practice and improvement.

A lot of responsibility is put into the hands of the leaders for each of these groups, however, I make rounds to each group offering assistance, clarification, and encouragement when needed.

Debate groups

It will come as no surprise that debate groups function rather similarly to speech groups. Time is divided in these groups between topic analysis, research, case writing/improvement, and running practice rounds.

Since the period ranges from 43-50 minutes, practice rounds sometimes look quite different during class time. Groups have been creative in the way they address the time constraints; some groups focus just on opening speeches, others break the debate into three class periods- stopping for clarification, help, direction.

Presentations

While I know my students will present their speeches time and time again at a tournament, what I like about having them present in class is that they get to show the rest of the team their progress.

Presenting in front of 30-60 students is hard, it is intimidating. However, it is also one of the most rewarding activities these students participate in while in class.

Projects

There are several projects I use to fill the time after districts & the end of the school year. Projects are designed to demonstrate the culmination of skills students have learned over the semester and to prepare those who will be returning the following year.

A student favorite is The Great Debate. I create a single elimination bracket of the class and all students participate in an Extemp Debate round in front of the class. This project gives students the opportunity to display their skills, and it gives me a chance to correct any bad habits that may have developed over the year.

Another project involves students prepping their speeches (writing outlines, selecting scripts, researching) for next year.

Perhaps my favorite unit is one that ties all of the components of the speech/debate class and of our district's 21sr Century Learning Competencies together. In short, it requires students to create an informed action plan using a relevant topic to the world they live in. More details about it are on p16-17.

A Year of Speech & Debate

August 2019
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

September 2019
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

October 2019
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

November 2019
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

December 2019
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

January 2020
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

February 2020
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

March 2020
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

April 2020
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

May 2020
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

June 2020
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

Legend:
- Speech groups
- Debate groups
- Whole group lessons
- Presentations
- Tournaments
- Projects
- No School/Breaks

Grading: the dirty word

Although I don't believe that most speech and debate educators put grading as the priority in their classrooms, it is something we have to address at some point.

At all of the NSDA Leadership Conferences and Education Conferences, the question eventually arises: How do you grade this thing we do?

The answers to this question are as varied and dynamic as the students who fill our rosters.

Regardless of our methods, one thing remains clear: in order to keep speech and debate curriculum in our schools and in our course offerings, we need to prove that we are evaluating our students in a fair and consistent manner.

To that end, after many tweaks and revisions, I have arrived at a method that works for me- it may not work everywhere, and each teacher/coach needs to find what works in their community/school.

I divide my grade book into 4 weighted categories: Participation, Tournaments, Performance, Final.

The category titles can sometimes be confusing, and I spend a great deal of time at the beginning of the semester reminding students what each category means.

Participation (45%):

Since we break into small groups so much of the time, I have a spreadsheet for each event broken down by day (see example below).

Mentors are given agency in this section; the mentor students track points for members of their group daily. If points are being deducted, mentors converse with me to keep me updated.

If an individual student is continuously losing points, I have a one-on-one conversation with that student about expectations, struggles, etc.

Tournaments (20%)

As a co-curricular class, tournament participation is a requirement for the class. There are different requirements for beginning and advanced students, but all students must attend a certain number of speech days and a certain number of debate days each semester.

However, grading a student on their placement at a tournament is not something I can justify in my grade book nor to my administration (and it just seems kind of mean). Instead, as long as students attend the tournament, go to all required rounds, watch out-rounds, and follow team rules, they earn full points in the Tournaments category.

*When unforeseen complications/ circumstances prevent students from participating, alternate assignments are arranged.

Performance (20%):

Presenting in front of class and participating in practice rounds constitute the performance grade. Rubrics are used to grade these performances, I do not use tournament ballots, since I want to be more specific with commentary & with grades.

Final (15%):

My school district requires that a final be administered in all courses. Usually there is an end of semester project that contributes to a grade in the final category, and there's always a classroom presentation on the day of the final that goes into this category.

LD		28-Jan	31-Jan	5-Feb	6-Feb	10-Feb	11-Feb	21-Feb	TOTAL	
Maya C										
Zoey K										
Elena L										
Garrison W										
Kevin W										
Yohanny A										
Ailene B										
Greydon G										
Kathryn M										
Kaitlyn R										
Shae W										

10-8 pts: prepared for daily activities, homework completed, on task throughout class

7-6 pts: somewhat prepared for activities, homeowork completed, on task 80% of class

5-4: not prepared, homework done- but incomplete, on task 70% of class

3-0: not prepared, homework not done, off task more than 40% of class

The rubric below was created with the Lion's Club speech contest in mind. Every year, to encourage students to participate in outside speaking contests, we use the Lion's Club topic as the topic for the final. All students in the class develop a speech to present during the week of finals. Then, as a class, we vote for the top 3 speeches *& those three students represent our school at the contest in January.

Previous topics have been: How can we solve the opioid crisis?/ The Internet: hero or villain?/Genetic engineering: good or bad?

	:0D Excellent (A)	:0) Good (B)	:0 l Fair (C)	:0/ Inadequate (D)	:0(Yikes! (F)
originality	Speaker approached the topic in a unique and inventive manner. **5**	Speaker presented an interesting stance on the topic. **4**	Speaker took a somewhat creative approach in addressing the topic **3.5**	Speech was somewhat mundane and lacking in originality **3**	Speech was primarily composed of secondary source information. **0-2**
adhering to the subject title	Clearly follows assigned topic and subject matter **5**	Adequately follows subject **4**	Subject is addressed, but could have been more clear **3.5**	Speech mentions subject, but it is clear that the speaker isn't sure what the subject really is **3**	Speech did not address the assigned topic. **0-2**
quality of material	Speaker researched the issue and used that research as a basis for the speech **10**	It is clear that research was completed, and most research is from valid and credible sources **8**	An attempt to include valid research in the speech was made **7**	Not enough research was completed to truly address this topic, research needs to be from credible sources **6**	Speech seems to be made up- it is evident that research was lacking **0-5**
well-roundedness of the speech	Speech offers multiple solutions to the problem, and/or includes the roles of multiple groups/agencies in correcting the crisis. **10**	Speaker offers some solutions to the problem and/or explores the roles of various entities in carrying out the solutions. **8**	Speaker offers a couple solutions to the problem and/or identifies the roles of those involved in the solutions. **7**	Speaker offers one solution to the problem and completely explores the roles of those involved in meeting the solution. **6**	Speech is repetitive and singular. Speaker took one topic and beat it to death. **0-5**
cohesiveness of the speech	Speech flows perfectly. Transitions move the speech from one topic to the next flawlessly. **5**	Speech flows well, transitions add to the cohesiveness of the speech. **4**	Speech is somewhat choppy and disjointed. **3.5**	Speech is quite disjointed and lacks appropriate transitions. **3**	Speech felt like it was forced together, rather than like it was one flowing piece. **0-2**
logic & organization of the speech	Speaker moved from one topic to the next in logical order. Solutions are offered and logical plans follow. **5**	Speech is mostly logical. Most ideas are logically placed. **4**	Speech is somewhat logical and organized. **3.5**	Speech lacked organization and logic. Speech was choppy and hard to follow. **3**	Speech jumped from one topic to another, transitions were non-existent. Speech does not make logical sense. **0-2**
persuasiveness of the speech	Speaker employs a variety of persuasive techniques and effectively convinces the audience that his/her solutions are realistic, reasonable, and attainable. **10**	Speaker convinces audience that the solutions presented are valid and reasonable. **8**	Speaker is somewhat convincing, but does not use enough persuasive devices in the speech. **7**	Speaker is not convincing, persuasive devices are not used effectively. **6**	No attempt to persuade was made in the speech. **0-5**
emphasis, voice control & volume	Speaker is in control of his/her voice throughout the speech, emphasis is added effectively to make specific points. Speaks loud enough to be heard by all in the audience. **10**	Speaker is even toned, and added emphasis to make some points. Speaks loud enough to be heard by all in the audience. **8**	Speaker has reasonable voice control during speech, and attempt to add emphasis. At times it is hard to hear what the speaker is saying because he/she is not speaking loud enough. **7**	Speech was mostly presented in a monotone manner, was shaky and uneven, emphasis was lacking. Student did not speak loud enough to be heard by all in the audience. **6**	There was too much intonation and gesturing. **OR** It was hard to tell whether the speaker was even alive. Speaker could not be heard by the majority of the audience. **0-5**
enunciation, pronunciation	Speaks clearly, all words can be understood, no words are mispronounced **5**	Speaker is clear, no more than 3 words are mispronounced. **4**	Speaker is clear, no more than 5 words are mispronounced. **3.5**	Speaker often mumbles, and/or mispronounces more than 5 words. **3**	I couldn't tell what the speaker was saying…there was too much mumbling. **0-2**
sincerity, enthusiasm, poise	Speaker took the topic/assignment seriously, and offered viable solutions to the problem. Student was professional 100% of the time. **10**	Student took the topic seriously. Student presented the speech in a mostly professional manner. **8**	Student lacked seriousness no more than 20% of the time, and was somewhat professional in presentation of the speech. **7**	Student lacked seriousness no more than 30% of the time and attempted to show some professionalism. **6**	Speaker did not take the assignment seriously, nor did he/she act professional while speaking. **0-5**
posture & body movements	Speaker stands up straight and is composed for the duration of the speech. Body movements enhance the speech. **10**	Speaker stands up straight 85% of the time, and does not make any distracting movements. **8**	Speaker displays a combination of good posture and poor posture, as well as appropriate and distracting body movements. **7**	Speaker slouches for more than 70% of the speech, leans on the board, makes distracting movements. **6**	Slouching, sitting, leaning against the board, wandering… Body movements distracted tremendously from the speech **0-5**
eye contact	Speaker makes and maintains eye contact will audience 99% of the time. **10**	Speaker maintains eye contact with audience 85% of the time. **8**	Speaker makes eye contact 70% of the time. **7**	Eye contact is sporadic, and uneven throughout the speech. **6**	Speaker looked down at the floor or at note card for the entirety of the speech. **0-5**
time requirement	Speech is 7 minutes **5**	Speech is 6 minutes **4**	Speech is 5 minutes **3.5**	Speech is 4 minutes **3**	Speech is less than 4 minutes **0-2**
TOTALS					

RHS Forensics Record

Your Name: _____

Tournament Location: _____   Tournament Date: _____

Please circle your individual event:

Informative	Oratory	US Extemp	International Extemp
HI	DI	DUO	POI
Storytelling	Impromptu		

Division: Novice   Senior

Number of competitors:_____   Number of competitors in Final Round: _____

Competition rankings per round:1st _____   2nd _____   3rd _____

Final Round Rankings: _____   _____   _____

Final Round Placement:_____

Speech/Piece Performed: _____

Your comments about your performance:
_____
_____

This ballot analysis is completed by all students the Mon. following a tournament weekend.
The idea of ballot analysis was handed down to my by my predecessor and has been altered over time to fit needs.

Please circle your debate event:

LD	Policy	Public Forum	Congress

Division: Novice   Senior

Number of rounds actually debated: _____

Number of wins: _____   Number of losses: _____

Speaker points per round: S/R1_____   S/R2_____   S/R3_____   S/R4_____   S5_____
(congress only)

Speaker point placement overall: _____

Number of competitors in your event: _____

Placement in Out-Rounds: _____

Your comments about your performance:
_____
_____

Ballot analysis helps me to put all of the information together in one spot. I really like listing the positive & negative comments from judges in one spot, it makes it easy to see what I need to improve.   —Neeva T.

Name: _____   **Events:** _____   **Tournament:** _____

Self-Evaluation and Ballot Analysis for Speech Events

1. Look carefully at the ratings you received. Identify the categories for ratings, and list the ratings you received in each round.

Ratings Categories:	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Finals	Finals	Finals

2. Look at the comments you received. List any areas for improvement or compliments your judges gave.

3. Think about the best speech in each of your rounds. What made it the best speech? What did that speech or speaker have that you/ yours does/did not? For extempers- what was the best speech you gave? What made it the best?

R1-

R2-

R3-

4. In your opinion, what are the strengths of your speech and speaking style? What are the weaknesses?

5. What changes will you make in your speech or your speaking style prior to the next tournament? List **at least three** specific changes and as much detail as possible.

1-

2-

3-

Self-Evaluation and Ballot Analysis for Non-Attenders

1. If you did not go to the tournament, explain why you were not there.

2. How did you prepare for your speech event this tournament? Be specific.

3. How do you plan to prepare for your speech event at the next tournament? Be specific.

4. How did you prepare for your debate event this tournament? Be specific.

5. How do you plan to prepare for your debate event at the next tournament? Be specific.

> Without the ballot analysis assignment, I couldn't remember certain rounds and what my thought process was and how to make changes for the future.
>
> —Garrison W.

Self-Evaluation and Ballot Analysis for Debate Events

1. Look carefully at the speaker ratings and/or the comments regarding speaking/delivery style. What did your judges view as your strengths <u>and</u> weaknesses?

2. Look carefully at the comments regarding decision. What did the judge view as the most important issue(s) in the round?

3. Do you agree or disagree with the decision made in the round? Why or why not? Remember, we don't blame judges for the decisions they make- think about what you did or did not do to persuade the judge.

4. Think about the best round you had during the day. What made it your best round? What qualities of debate were present?

5. Think about the toughest opponent you competed with during the day. What made this person your toughest opponent? What qualities could you emulate to make yourself the toughest competition in the room?

Self-Evaluation and Ballot Analysis for Congress

1. What was the piece of legislation you wrote for this tournament cycle about? Why did you select that topic?

2. Explain how you researched information regarding the legislation packet. (say more than "I went online")

3. What were the point scores you earned for each speech card you gave up? Explain why you think you earned each score.

4. How many speech cards did you give up? What did you speak about? Did you use evidence? Why or why not?

5. Think about the toughest opponent you competed with during the day or the strongest speaker in the House in which you competed. What made this person your toughest opponent? What qualities could you emulate to make yourself the toughest competition in the room?

Putting it all together

End of the Year Ballot Portfolio

Arrange your ballots in event, round, and tournament order. Then answer the following questions. Your analysis for each event should appear on separate sheets of paper. Your responses need to be typed. All responses & ballots need to be collected in a notebook and turned in together.

Repeat this process 3x (Panel A Speech Event /Panel B Speech Event/ Debate Event)

1. Do your ballots show growth over the course of the year? How? Or why not? (Make specific reference to specific ballots & comments that span the entire season).
2. What round or tournament are you most proud of? Why? What made this round/tournament stand out? (Specifically reference comments made by judges on your ballots that indicate the success of the round/tournament).
3. Based on what the judges indicated on ballots, what is your greatest strength in this event? Explain what you have done to hone your skills at this strength.
4. What are the areas that judges consistently mentioned that you needed to improve? Even if you don't do speech/debate again, how can you make improvements in these areas?
5. What is one suggestion you have regarding how to improve the teaching/leading of this event? Explain in detail.

Making an impact

This lesson plan is the result of wanting something more to do with my students once our tournament cycle concludes for the year.

So many of the students who walk through our doors go on to be successful and powerful members of society. Rather than waiting to see what they are capable of once they leave the high school hallways, I created this unit to show them how impactful their voices are right now, even as students.

The components of the lesson were inspired by a 21st Century Leaders class I took a few years ago.

I believe this lesson addresses the topics of equity and inclusion in a unique way. By nature of the topics each gorup explores, the students learn how to be more inclusive of people in groups they may not have otherwise encountered.

The unit is also designed in such a way that in each of the student groups, members have to work cooperatively to produce a cohesive end product.

In the microcosm of our classroom, students will be coming together from different groups to combine their collective skill sets and expertise. In some cases, students will be placed in groups with students they have not worked with yet during the school year-pushing them to learn even more about one another.

This project also causes students to consider their audience and cater to the unique characteristics of each type of audience their project might reach.

Objective:
Students will be able to use the skills they have learned in their speech & debate events and collaborate with peers in the class to create a multi-media project focused on a current controversial issue.

Standards:
Washoe County School District 21st Century Competencies
- collaborate with others ... to discuss an issue, solve a problem, or create a product, rather than conduct the majority of their learning alone;
- construct their own knowledge ... by applying critical thinking to generate ideas an understandings that are new to them, rather than reproduce and repeat established procedures;
- define and develop solutions to problems ... that are new to them, or complete tasks they have not been instructed how to do, or design complex products that satisfies a set of requirements;
- use appropriate technologies ... in ways that are organic to the learning process—such as to construct knowledge or design products—rather than learn to use specific technologies;
- regulate their own behaviors ... by engaging in long-term activities in which they are required to plan the process of their own work and improve it over multiple iterations using feedback from multiple sources, rather than merely complete assigned tasks
- communicate skillfully ... using multiple modes to communicate a coherent message to a particular audience.

Procedures:
1. Divide the class into groups of 6-8 students. Try to establish speech/debate event diversity within each group.
2. Once groups have been created, have those group select a topic for their project.
3. Show groups public awareness campaign videos and posters. Explain what a public awareness campaign is.
4. Groups will meet for 40-50min daily for 15 class periods.

Topic Options:

|		
Drug/Opioid Crisis	LGBTQ Rights	Mental Health Awareness
Suicide Awareness/Prevention	Homelessness	Effects of Social Media on Teens
Increased Education Funds	Sex Trafficking	
Gun Control	Vape Use by Teens	*or clear a topic with teacher

Products:

All groups need to produce

- a memorized interp (HI, DI, Duo or POI) – include original pages & memorized cutting
- a memorized OO or Info – include typed speech w/ highlighted quotes, and MLA citation
  a resolution or bill about the selected topic
- a pro & con case for important issues surrounding the selected topic OR about optional paths to "solve" the issue
- a product to reach the intended audience (video, TedTalk, PowerPoint, letter campaign, news coverage, etc)
  This needs to be an informed action plan that each group creates. The intent is that they reach out to the community & work for change.

Assessment:

Students will be graded based on their individual contributions/performances to the group projects. Rubrics for each product will be used for this part of the grade. Groups will also be graded on the cohesiveness of the products they created.

"Education is not the learning of facts, but the training of the mind to think."
-Albert Einstein
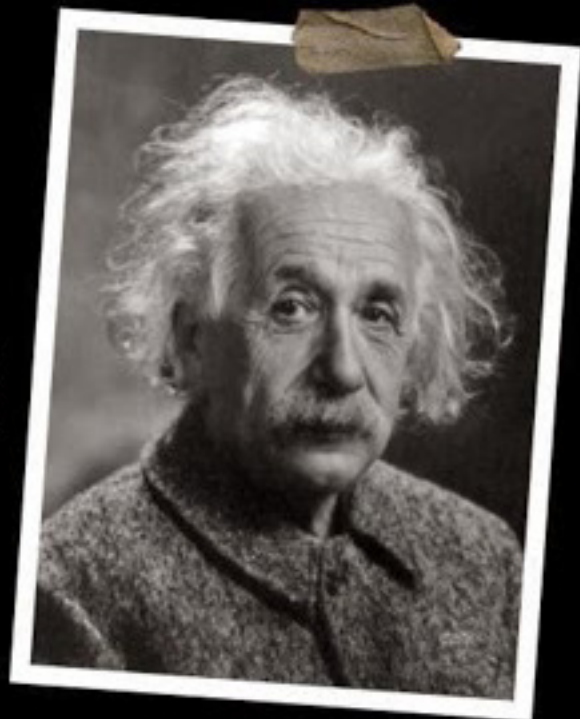
Using Your Voice for Change

"It is not enough to simply listen to student voice. Educators have an ethical imperative to do something with students, and that is why meaningful student involvement is vital to school improvement."
Adam Fletcher, Meaningful Student Involvement Guide to Students as Partners

Over the next two months, you will be working with a group to show how powerful your voices are, and to bring about some kind of change in your world. Ms. Briggs will give you a series of topics your group may choose from, OR as a group, you may present an alternate topic.

Your group will be made up of students from a variety of speech and debate events. Collectively, you will need to complete the tasks listed below. In some cases, some of you may end up using the products of this project for your speech events next year, but that's just a bonus- it is not required. In fact, just because a group member belonged to s particular speech group does not mean they are required to complete that portion of this project- be flexible- work as a group to decide who will do each part.

All groups need to produce
• a memorized interp (HI, DI, Duo or POI) – include original pages & memorized cutting
• a memorized OO or Info – include typed speech w/ highlighted quotes, and MLA citation
• a resolution or bill about the selected topic
• a pro & con case for important issues surrounding the selected topic OR about optional paths to "solve" the issue (unless otherwise approved, use Extemp Debate format)
• a product to reach the intended audience (video, TedTalk, PowerPoint, letter campaign, news coverage, etc)
>   *This needs to be an informed action plan that each group creates/does. The intent is that they reach out to the community & work for change. Consider what local organizations we have that might allow you to present your complete package at their location or at an event they have planned. Is your project something we could advertise for the Freshman Seminar classes to come see in the theater? [see Briggs to work on scheduling details for events]

Group Members: _____   Topic: _____
                  _____
                  _____
                  _____
                  _____

Due date for project components/class presentations: May 8
*Event dates to showcase your project to an outside audience may take place after this date.

IE Presentation Rubric

This is the rubric I use for class presentations of Individual Speech Events prior to tournaments. It is general so that I can use it for all speech events- even though the particulars in each event vary quite a bit. I accommodate for those differences with the individual comments I make as each student presents. Individual groups also occasionally use these rubrics when they present to one another during speech days. In those cases, leaders usually complete the rubric & comments section.

From the students:

"The benefit of presenting to the whole class is that you get to see how a variety of people react to your speech, rather than just the people in your group or the people you're competing against at a tournament." •Zion D.

"Parts of the rubric such as blocking and tone are super beneficial because sometimes I'm not aware of what I'm doing and the feedback is helpful." •Elena L

"Seeing my mentors present first helped me learn what a strong presentation looks like." •Amanda W.

"The presentation rubric is good because it is personalized to our performance." •Elizabeth S.

"The most helpful part is the comments because they let me know what I need to work on. And, compliments from the teacher really boost my confidence." •Shelby H.

"The benefit of the rubric is that it's not a ballot. You can get a high score on a rubric even if your piece isn't the best in the class." •Mya D.

"The comments section of the rubric is the best because we get feedback on what we need to change, but also on what we did well." •Jenna A.

"There's a different type of motivation that comes with not wanting to disappoint an upperclassman that you look up to. It makes us closer & the class more fun. We all want each other to do well when we present in front of the class." •Lauren K

Extending beyond the speech & debate class

Integrating Speaking & Listening Standards into the English classroom is not that difficult, but doing so in a creative way and with a grade sometimes is.

This unit project came together using congressional debate as a template.

In the real-world, we know that there are many factors that contributed to the hardships of the 1930's Depression, but for this assignment, I ask the students to ignore the culpability of the group to which they are assigned, and place blame on two other specific actors. The result is a class discussion/organized debate full of throwing shade and blind defenses.

One of the greatest things that comes from this activity is the near universal conclusion that it's unfair to view any group as completely blameless in this mess.

Objective:
-Using the events described in "The Grapes of Wrath" examine what factors contributed to the hardships experienced by Americans during the Dustbowl & Great Depression.
-Participate in an organized class discussion/debate to blame and defend actions of a specific group identified in "The Grapes of Wrath"

Nevada Academic Content Standards for English Language Arts:
• Reading Literature 11.1 - Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
• Reading Informational Text 11.7 - Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.
• Speaking & Listening 11.1 - Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
• Speaking & Listening 11.4 - Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

Procedures:
1. On Day 1 of the novel unit, divide students into 3 groups: Californians, Oklahomans, Banks/Government.
2. Explain the "Who's to Blame" quote tracker. (Throughout the unit, students need to track quotes that blame the other 2 groups for the chaos/hardships that plague American's during this time period. They also need to record quotes that work to defend their group for poor/instigative behavior during the time period.) Quotes may come from the textbook, classroom presentations/videos, and non-fiction articles assigned in class during this unit.

3. Periodically throughout the unit, plan days for groups to meet and trade quotes, discuss their progress.
4. Once the class has finished reading the novel, plan several days for groups to meet and discuss. In those groups, students will claim specific quotes as theirs (so that there are not repeats during the whole class discussion/debate). Once quotes have been distributed among group members, each student will individually write reasoning to accompany each quotes (about 5 to blame group A, 5 to blame group B, and 5 to defend their group).
5. On the day of the discussion, put all desks into a giant circle. Create nameplates for each group. (I choose to seat them randomly- as opposed to seating them in clumps by group- mainly so that when I walk around to grab speaker cards, there is diversity in my selection)
6. While students are speaking I write notes on their speaker cards & complete the rubric on the back. I also guide students to keep the slow of the discussion going. It's usually clunky for the first 10min, but then finds it's groove.

Assessment:
The project grade portion of the assignment will be assessed using a speaking rubric (see next page). The base system will be used to determine how many times students will have needed to speak during the discussion/ debate, and how many points they end up with overall. As a bonus, the most convincing team during the discussion/debate will collectively earn extra credit points.
Points will also go into a separate category for the written work that goes with the discussion: the quote tracker & the evidence/reasoning pages.
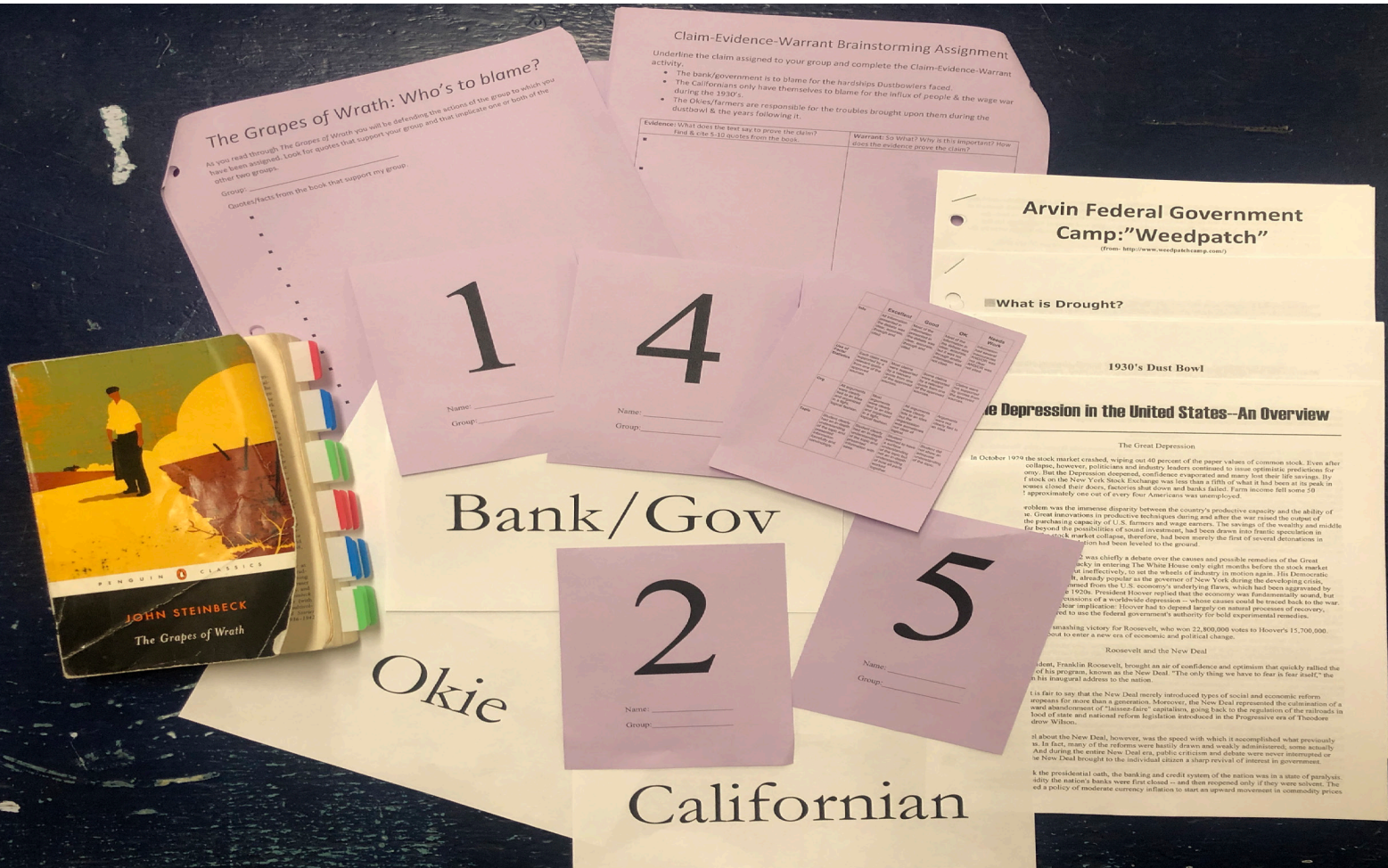
Giving Back

NSDA Ed Conference Presenter 2018

Sagebrush District Chair 2011–present

Northern NV Forensic League President 2010– present

NSDA Leadership Conference Presenter 2016

NSDA Internet Rules Committee, 2018

Northern NV Forensic League Congress Chair 2009–2010

New Voices; students promote speech laws

In 2017 I was working with other journalism teachers in the state to pass a law that would restore the state to the Tinker standard in terms of student press freedom (opposed to forcing students to adhere to the more restricted policies established by the Hazelwood Standard). The effort is known nationally as New Voices.

As part of the effort to get the law passed, we needed student voices to support the need for the legislation. Seeing a direct connection between the content of both journalism and speech/debate, I enlisted the help of my speech students.

As I saw it, giving students voice anywhere in education extends to the speech/debate classroom

in that students regularly select interp pieces, speech topics, and take their own stances on debate topics. If we agree to allow student voices to be limited, we take away the very thing speech classes are designed to promote- civic discourse, expansion of view points, development of thoughts.

Several of the students from my speech & debate class joined my journalism students and spoke in front of the House Education Committee and in front of the Senate Education Committee.

In an incredible display of cross-curricular education, the students from my speech class were able to coach the journalism students on their public speaking, and the journalism students

were able to explain the extension of how the new law would protect their choices to perform more "risky" interps or to write speeches criticizing the school, district, community, etc.

The law passed, and is now known as Nevada

Revised Statute 388.077. I cannot underscore the influence the students who testified had on the decision. Several of the Senators made special comment regarding impact the student testimonies had in their support and eventual votes for the law.

Colleague Commentary

"You've helped me be able to actually become a coach, which was awesome. You're fair and have acted as a mentor to me with patience and acceptance. When I was insecure about joining this group, you made me feel welcome and free to make my own name for myself." **-Jill Schufelt**, Pioneer High School, NV

"You have given me parent letters, reflection materials, and advice about the rules and regulations needed to be a successful coach/teacher. You truly desire for schools across the district to strengthen their teams for the betterment of the league/community, and it shows by how you share and support fellow coaches." **-Anna Santoro**, Spanish Springs High School. NV.

"You have helped me with each step of establishing a class/team. You explained how to sign students up for the [NSDA}, and how to get materials about different events.

You helped me establish a class by providing the course description to submit to admin. As well as syllabus and class materials.

You made your star students available to coach my kids on how to debate as if they were coaching their own team. I have been able to use the program you taught at the [NSDA] conference to establish peer teaching allowing my team/class to grow." **-Don Speth**, Wooster High School, NV.

"You are the master of answering tough questions! You have helped me navigate many difficult situations. One of the things I admire about you most, is your ability to see through a situation and quickly determine the fairest and most reasonable solution.

Through the years, these situations have included navigating difficulties with a colleague, disciplinary issues with students, and how to respond appropriately to a parent.

Also, when a question about a rule arises at a tournament, you are able to quickly answer (or look up the answer) and act in a way that is fair to all students involved." **-Joy Shelver**, Spring Creek High School, NV

Parent Perspectives

"In addition to how she interacts with her students, she is equally as great at keeping patents in the loop at all times. We were just as aware as the students of what was going on in the class/on the team. Large projects to promotes the program are a priority of hers. Ms. Briggs invites the parents to share feedback and ideas so that we are a part of the events. She listened to our thoughts and as a "team" we all worked together. I think that's part of why Reno has done so well for all these years; she cares about the stakeholders, and doesn't try to do it all by herself. She makes parents feel like we matter as much as our children matter." **-Lisa Taitel**

"In Ms. Briggs' class my daughter has learned what it truly means to be part of a community. One way this was demonstrated was when a young man in class didn't have the appropriate attire to wear to a tournament. Ms. Briggs purchased him clothes for that weekend, but also reached out to parents and friends and asked for gently worn donations so he would have options for future events. The response was overwhelming and her class room quickly filled up with donations. I think the impact of this was immeasurable, not only for this young man, but all of the students in her class." **-Kristie Kinder**

"Her rigorous speech and debate class is sought after by many students, and most students continue to participate each year of high school. It is evident that Christy values the rapport between students and the strong reputation that her class holds. I see through my children, the pride and respect they have for the team and the process. The encouragement of peer mentoring and collaboration creates a strong community.

We all have teachers who affect us beyond high school and whose lessons are the foundation of our character. Christy Briggs is one of those teachers and I am so fortunate to have seen my children grow in her care." **-Virginia Briggs**

Kabriel Hoover

The most impactful teachers push you, and Ms. Briggs certainly did.

She let me expand my horizons and drove me to do my best in each event. My senior year, she put me in charge of events I had no experience with, and I know that sounds like a bad decision. But it worked. I don't know how she knew, but she must have had a hunch that I would be a good fit for those events in terms of teaching and performing.
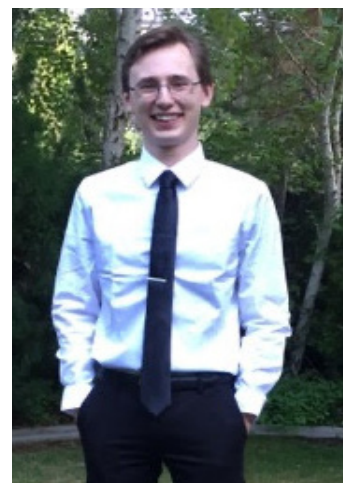
Just generally speaking, she had an eye for spotting students' strengths and weaknesses. Building off of their strengths, she would place individuals in the best event for them.

The skills and knowledge I obtained during my time in Ms. Briggs' Speech & Debate class proves itself to be relevant today. As an entertainment journalist, no one needed to teach me to cite my sources or craft an editorial argument – Ms. Briggs already did. As a substitute teacher, I can speak eloquently in front of hundreds of students every day. In fact, thanks to the trust Ms. Briggs placed in me, I got my start teaching in those groups from Speech & Debate.

Ms. Briggs drove me to be my best self, to constantly look for improvement, and to view the world critically. These skills I can attribute no amount of value to – they are simply invaluable.

Heather Foster

More than any other high school activity, speech and debate defined my high school experience and inspired the passions that I carry with me as a college student. In debate, I learned to critically reflect on my opinions and values, appreciate and respect opposing opinions, and develop a deep appreciation for classic philosophy as it relates to modern global conflicts. In speech, I learned to think on my feet, be unapologetically creative, and consider the simplest of words, phrases, or objects from novel perspectives. Guiding me through this entire experience was Ms. Briggs.

In class and after school, Ms. Briggs brought an incredible balance of guidance and restraint, offering advice and assistance when needed while also allowing students to strengthen their own skills through teaching on another.

In addition to being a committed, intelligent, and engaging coach, Ms. Briggs also created a diverse community of students; from freshman to senior, introvert to extravert. From the three time national tournament qualifier who couldn't imagine a more wonderful place to be during fourth period to the shy and silent student whose parents forced him into debate in hopes that he may "come out of his shell." Ms. Briggs created a home for all these students to freely express themselves and explore their many often undiscovered talents in communication. Many achieved local honors, a few were national competitors, but all students that walked into GB-4 left with a new sense of self-confidence and pride in what they are able to intellectually produce and how well they are able to communicate it.

Today, I continue to utilize the research and communication skills I developed under Ms. Briggs guidance as a political science and history double major at Yale University. I continue to pursue my love of politics, which I developed in speech and debate, as the current junior class president and as an environmental activist on campus and in New Haven.

Most importantly, I've carried Ms. Briggs' commitment to creating a safe and supportive environment to grow and discover in every class and club I enter. This is just a small survey of how speech and debate and Ms. Briggs changed my life and helped me grow into the woman I am today, and for those lessons and so many more, I am forever grateful.

Taylor Pittman

This might seem like a hyperbole, but the reality is Ms. Briggs is one of my biggest role models and is someone who helped shape the person I am today.

While learning how to write and take notes are important things, Ms. Briggs taught me much more than

that. When I was a freshman, I was competing at a tournament, and despite spending hours on cases, I did not break to semi-finals. I was upset as I thought all of my hard work was for nothing. I was crying in the hall when Ms. Briggs came up to me. I asked her why I didn't break and if this whole debate thing was going to be worth it if I continued to lose.

She said, "sometimes we lose; but winning or losing is not what matters, it is about whether or not you are proud of the work you have done."

She told me that so long as I pushed myself to keep learning, then the results of the round didn't matter. That advice has stuck me beyond my debate years. I understand that winning is not my goal, but rather

becoming a better writer, speaker, or whatever else, is more important.

This is just one story out of countless others. I could tell you about the time she taught me how to deal with my peers who were not doing their part, or the time she told me to hold my chin up high when others want to tear me down, or maybe even the time when she gave me the biggest hug and told me she was proud of me when I qualified for Nationals.

All of these moments helped build my confidence, reassure me in my abilities, and teach me to be a strong woman. Yes, I learned how to better my writing under the guidance of Ms. Briggs, I also learned how to become a better person.

Nathaniel Haas

Ms. Briggs saw potential in me as a young debater, and did everything she could to support me. She personally advocated for the school district to allow my partner and I to attend more out of town tournaments, made arrangements for us to hold more weekend practices at the school, and took extra weekends where there were not regional tournaments to chaperone us at out of town tournaments. A true mark of an outstanding educator is someone who goes above and beyond the call of duty to support gifted students and allow their talents to grow, and I know I am not the only student who has benefited

from this generosity over the years. As a direct result of this support, I went on to debate for my University, where I received a substantial scholarship and subsequently attended law school. Frequently, sitting in law school classes, and currently, when I litigate cases as a practicing attorney, I remember developing the written and oral skills I have used every day of my life in Ms. Briggs' speech and debate classroom. I know that without her extra dedication and attention to my love for speech and debate, I would not have become the person I am today.

Ms. Briggs runs the most successful debate

team in Northern Nevada because she has designed a program where older students become mentors to younger ones. Students in the class receive a wealth of instruction from her, but what makes the program special is the bonds forged between the senior students, who Ms. Briggs encourages to hear practice speeches, give feedback, and become lifelong friends to the novices. To this day, I count among my closest friends one of the senior students who first taught me policy debate. These lifelong connections are not accidental, they are a direct result of the culture Ms. Briggs fosters that transcends theclassroom,

and sends graduates out into their respective career fields with an appreciation for the value of mentorship in whatever they do. As a result, Ms. Briggs' former students have gone on to become not only successful in whatever careers they have chosen, but committed to encouraging the success of others, too.

Thank You!

Thank you for allowing me to share this portfolio with you. I hope you feel that it has created a complete picture of who I am as an educator and what it's like to work with me.

My life has been affected in so many positive ways as a result of teaching speech & debate, from the way I interact with students to the wide ranging support network of people I know are just an email away. Just as this event changes the lives of students, it has changed mine. I look forward to spending many more years with the community formed by teaching and coaching speech & debate.

–Christy Briggs