ROSTRUM

VOLUME 84 ISSUE 3 NOVEMBER 2009

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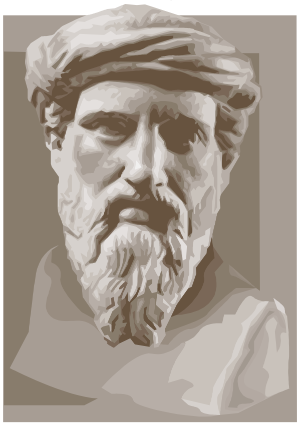

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Session	Arrival	Departure
Individual Events	June 22, 2010	July 6, 2010
Individual Events + Extension	June 22, 2010	July 10, 2010
CX Debate Session 1 (Marathon & Experienced)	June 20, 2010	July 9, 2010
CX Debate Session 2 (Marathon & Experienced)	July 12, 2010	July 31, 2010
CX Debate Supersession/Survivors	June 20, 2010	July 31, 2010
UTNIF CX Novice	July 16, 2010	July 25, 2010
Lincoln-Douglas Debate	July 12, 2010	July 25, 2010
Lincoln-Douglas Debate + Extension	July 12, 2010	July 30, 2010
UIL Focus CX Minisession A	July 13, 2010	July 19, 2010
UIL Focus CX Minisession B	July 21, 2010	July 27, 2010

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Closing the Gap:
How Debating Fights Poverty

by Jason M. Jerista,
Lincoln Financial Group

Building a secure future, like a well-crafted argument, takes patience, persistence, and a vision. Participating in the National Forensic League, as a debater, coach, or supporter, creates a sound foundation that fortifies the futures of not only NFL members, but our schools, our communities, and our nation.

Without focusing on a regression analysis that shows a positive correlation between extracurricular activities and high school graduation rates, realize that the numbers do not lie. Studies indicate that students who participate in extracurricular programs, such as debate programs, earn higher scores on standardized tests and are more likely to graduate high school. There is evidence that debating improves literacy rates and students indicate that their experiences in programs such as the NFL have helped them improve their self-confidence. With higher standardized test scores, better literacy, and higher graduation rates, students who participate in debate programs are more likely to attend post-secondary educational institutions.

Students who attend institutions of higher education obtain a wide range of personal, financial, and other lifelong benefits; likewise, taxpayers and society as a whole derive a multitude of direct and indirect benefits when citizens have access to post-secondary education.

The College Board concisely summarizes the key benefits associated with a post-secondary education, which is positively impacted by participation in extracurricular activities, such as the National Forensic League:

Benefits to Individuals

- There is a positive correlation between higher levels of education and higher earnings for all racial/ethnic groups and for both men and women.
- In addition to earning higher wages, college graduates are more likely than others to enjoy employer-provided health insurance and pension benefits.

Lincoln
Financial Group®

- The income gap between high school graduates and college graduates has increased significantly over time. The earnings benefit is large enough for the average college graduate to recoup both earnings forgone during the college years and the cost of full tuition and fees in a relatively short period of time.

Benefits to Society

- Higher levels of education correspond to lower unemployment and poverty rates. So, in addition to contributing more to tax revenues than others do, adults with higher levels of education are less likely to depend on social safety-net programs, generating decreased demand on public budgets.
- The earnings of workers with lower education levels are positively affected by the presence of college graduates in the workforce.
- Higher levels of education are correlated with higher levels of civic participation, including volunteer work, voting, and blood donation, as well as with greater levels of openness to the opinions of others.

Uneven rates of participation in higher education across different segments of US society should be a matter of urgent interest not only to the individuals directly affected, but also to public policymakers at the federal, state, and local levels. Debating can help fight poverty by improving the lives of NFL participants. Additionally, debating can lead participants to post-secondary education, which has wide-reaching benefits for society as a whole. As debaters, you have the power to raise these key issues and fight to develop creative solutions to poverty, literacy, and education gaps in the US and worldwide. ■

From the Editor
J. Scott Wunn

Dear NFL,

I awoke this past Sunday excited to take a healthy walk around the neighborhood and burn off some of those calories I had so effortlessly consumed at the fall Board meeting. As I took a step outside, my relentless excitement was halted by the reality of Wisconsin climate change. The brisk 28 degree low was enough to send me back inside making excuses for my sudden lack of focus on wellness.

In my 10 years of coaching and 6 years directing the NFL, my body has become all too familiar with the roller coaster ride of heightened caloric intake and exercise deficiency that occurs with weekend tournaments, binge eating, and chaos control sleeping regiments. It is certainly a pattern that is unhealthy and unwise.

This month's issue speaks to much greater health risks in the world. So many have no control over their personal health. Our community is fortunate to have the opportunity to debate and discuss society's role in ending poverty from the relative comfort of our classrooms and auditoriums. It seems almost hypocritical for us to live an unhealthy lifestyle as we propose new ways to improve the health and welfare of others.

So, as we enter another stretch of fall and winter tournaments, holidays, and team McDonald's stops at 6am, let's do what we can to live healthy. The National Office staff has committed to doing this. On November 1st, the Ripon staff will begin a 12-week **"Walking for Wellness"** program. The NFL Web site will post the total miles walked and total pounds lost by the NFL office staff. We hope that coaches around the country will follow suit and report their incredible wellness strategies.

Have a great and healthy fall and winter.

Sincerely,

J. Scott Wunn

J. Scott Wunn
NFL Executive Director

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TOPICS

November 2009
Public Forum Debate

Resolved: Failed nations are a greater threat to the United States than stable nations.

November/December 2009
Lincoln Douglas Debate

Resolved: Public health concerns justify compulsory immunization.

2009-2010
Policy Debate

Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase social services for persons living in poverty in the United States.

Partnership Contest Resolutions

2009-2010
International
Public Policy Forum

Resolved: The United Nations should substantially increase humanitarian assistance for persons living in poverty.

2009
The People Speak
Global Debates

Resolved: When it cannot do both, the United Nations should prioritize poverty reduction over combating climate change.

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The NFL is looking for new, fresh articles to publish in our monthly magazine. If you have innovative research, great ideas, or thoughtful opinions, please consider submitting an article. Please note that NFL does not guarantee when or if submissions will be published.

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www.nflonline.org/Rostrum/Writing

Topic Release Information

Lincoln Douglas debate topics are available by calling the NFL Topic Hotline at 920-748-LD4U (5348) or visiting *www.nflonline.org* under Resources/Current Topics.

LD Topic Release Dates:

August 15	--	*September-October Topic*
October 1	--	*November-December Topic*
December 1	--	*January-February Topic*
February 1	--	*March-April Topic*
May 1	--	*National Tournament Topic*

Public Forum Topic Release Dates:

August 15	--	*September Topic*
September 1	--	*October Topic*
October 1	--	*November Topic*
November 1	--	*December Topic*
December 1	--	*January Topic*
December 15	--	*February Topic*
February 1	--	*March Topic*
March 1	--	*April Topic*
May 1	--	*National Tournament Topic*

Policy Debate Topic for 2010-2011

- Topic synopsis and ballot printed in October *Rostrum*
- Final ballot for Policy Debate topic in December *Rostrum*
- Topic for 2010-2011 released in February *Rostrum*

ROSTRUM

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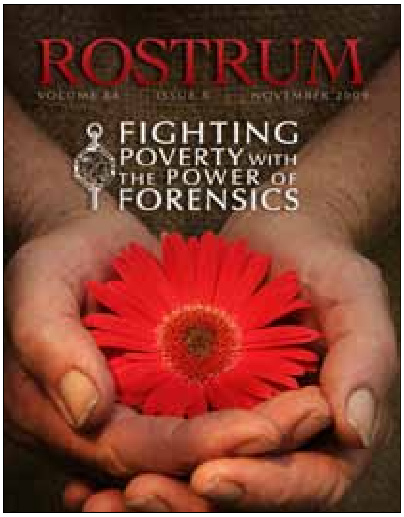

Cover Story

In Every Issue

In This Issue

NFL Board of Directors Fall Minutes

Fall Meeting
October 2-3, 2009
Kansas City, MO

The NFL Board of Directors held its fall meeting in Kansas City, MO on October 2-3, 2009. Present were President Billy Tate, Vice President Don Crabtree, Harold Keller, Kandi King, Bro. Kevin Dalmasse, Pam Cady Wycoff, Tommie Lindsey, Jr., Pam McComas, and Timothy Sheaff. Alternate Christopher McDonald was also present.

President Billy Tate called the meeting to order at 9am.

National Tournaments

Vice President Don Crabtree gave an overview of the Kansas City nationals.

Moved by Lindsey, seconded by Keller

"The entry fees for the NFL National Tournament shall be increased by $10 for an individual entry and $20 for a team entry with money raised to be placed in reserve as grant funds for offsetting expenses incurred by the local host of the NFL National Tournament as needed."

Passed: 9-0

The costs of hosting an NFL National Tournament can place a large financial burden on the local host committee and schools. As a safeguard, the NFL will earmark funds to provide appropriate assistance as needed.

Budget

Moved by Crabtree, seconded by Wycoff

"Approve the 2009-2010 national tournament and honor society budgets as presented by the Executive Director."

Passed: 9-0

In closed executive session, the Board agreed to renew the Executive Director's contract for an additional six year period.

Student Congress

Adam Jacobi, Chair of the Student Congress Review and Recommendations Committee, presented the recommendations of the committee for consideration. The Board of Directors commended Mr. Jacobi, Board liaison Pam McComas, and the rest of the committee on their outstanding work and attention to detail.

Moved by Dalmasse, seconded by King

"All changes to Student Congress rules and procedures regarding the national tournament will be implemented at the 2010 Kansas City nationals. All changes to Student Congress rules and procedures regarding the district tournament will be implemented in the 2010-2011 school year."

Passed: 8-0-1

Aye: Crabtree, Wycoff, King, Sheaff, Keller, Dalmasse, McComas, Tate

Abstain: Lindsey

The Board of Directors has decided that changes that involve the national tournament can be facilitated by the 2010 event. To allow districts sufficient time to make adjustments, all changes (unless noted) that only involve the district tournament will be implemented during the 2010-2011 district competition season. *See pages 11-12 for clarification.*

Moved by Lindsey, seconded by McComas

"Rename Student Congress as Congressional Debate."

Passed: 7-2

Aye: Crabtree, Wycoff, King, Sheaff, Lindsey, Dalmasse, McComas

Nay: Keller, Tate

Moved by Wycoff, seconded by King

"Standardize preferential ranking by judges as the uniform, official method for contestant advancement to elimination rounds and placement at the end of rounds, inclusive of both the district and national tournaments.

"Allow a district the option of selecting for all its chambers (both the Senate and House) student preferential ranking after judges rank to determine a ballot of nominees in each chamber to determine qualification to the national tournament."

Passed:8-0-1

Aye: Wycoff, King, Sheaff, Lindsey, Dalmasse, Crabtree, Tate

Abstain: Keller

This allows the use of either preference at districts.

Moved by McComas, seconded by Dalmasse

"Adopt the format of the proposed evaluation ballots as recommended by the Congress Committee."

Passed: 6-2-1

Aye: Wycoff, King, McDonald, Lindsey, Dalmasse, McComas

Nay: Keller, Tate

Abstain: Sheaff

The committee has created an evaluation ballot that will now be used in all NFL district and national competition. The ballot will be provided to all districts this year for optional use and will be used at the national tournament.

Moved by Wycoff, seconded by King
"Add a two-minute questioning period following the first negative speech on each legislation in Congressional Debate."
Passed: 7-2
Aye: Wycoff, King, McDonald, Sheaff, Lindsey, Dalmasse, McComas
Nay: Tate, Keller

Moved by Wycoff, seconded by McComas
"Disallow the scoring of committee meetings at the district or national level."
Passed: 9-0

Moved by King, seconded by Dalmasse
"Add to the existing speaker recognition priority rules (requiring a presiding officer to first recognize those who have not spoken, next those who have spoken less), a third priority: those who have spoken earliest, known as 'recency.'"
Passed: 9-0

Moved by Wycoff, seconded by Crabtree
"Define a session of Congress as requiring:

a. Minimum of three hours of debate (not including elections and recesses); 18-20 students is defined as the optimum number for a three-hour session; otherwise, a session should be lengthened by 10 minutes per each additional student beyond 20. If a district offers a super session, it has the flexibility to have additional, smaller preliminary chambers before advancing students to the super session.
b. Election of a presiding officer
c. New seating chart (necessary accommodations for students with special needs [ADA] may be made)
d. Resetting of precedence/recency
e. New legislation that has not been debated in a previous session at that tournament"

Passed: 8-1
Aye: Crabtree, Wycoff, King, Sheaff, Lindsey, Dalmasse, McComas, Tate
Nay: Keller

Moved by McComas, seconded by McDonald
"A minimum of two three-hour sessions (as previously defined) shall be required for a one-day District Congress tournament."
Passed: 8-1
Aye: Wycoff, King, Sheaff, Lindsey, McComas, Tate, Keller, McDonald
Nay: Dalmasse

Moved by McComas, seconded by Sheaff
"Districts may use one of two methods for selecting presiding officers:

a. Direct vote for student presiding officer. Presiding officer nominations will come from the floor, nominees will give candidacy speeches, and students will elect a presiding officer for the session. If no other student wishes to preside for subsequent sessions, no election will be held.
b. Adult presiding officer. The district committee may appoint an adult presiding officer with no affiliation to any participants."

Passed: 9-0

Moved by Wycoff, seconded by McComas
"The National Office staff will review legislation to ensure it meets standards set forth in the national tournament manual. Legislation not meeting those standards will be returned with feedback to the District Chair, who may resubmit the legislation, if done by the deadline established by the National Office. Districts may submit two items (preferably a bill and a resolution), one of which would be selected for the National Congress. If a district does not submit legislation adhering to standards in the manual by the final deadline, its legislation will not be included in the National Congress docket. A committee shall be established by the Executive Director to review and rank legislation **(district names will be removed to ensure anonymity)** selected by the National Office, determining the top twelve ranked items to be used in the semifinal sessions, and the next 25 (ranked 13-37) to be used universally in the preliminary sessions. The committee should consist of members who do not have students competing in the current National Congress. The National Office shall work with Stennis Center fellows to procure legislation for the final session."
Passed: 8-1
Aye: Wycoff, King, Sheaff, Lindsey, McComas, Tate, Dalmasse, McDonald
Nay: Keller

Moved by King, second by McComas
"Eight scorers and one parliamentarian shall adjudicate the final round in each chamber (Senate and House) of the National Congress. The NFL may work with the Stennis Center to procure bipartisan Congressional aides/chiefs of staff, and work with the local host committee to find state elected officials to comprise no more than three judges on each final round panel (coaches will still comprise at least five of the eight judges)."
Passed: 8-0-1
Aye: Wycoff, King, Sheaff, Lindsey, McComas, Tate, Dalmasse, McDonald
Abstain: Keller

Moved by McComas, seconded Wycoff
"Six finalists shall be awarded trophies at the national tournament final awards assembly. The remaining students who participated in the final round/session will be recognized as final session participants (all final round participants, including the top six finalists, receive Stennis medallions).

"The remaining final round participants will be recognized in a like manner to semifinalists in other events."

Passed: 8-0-1
Aye: Crabtree, Wycoff, King, Sheaff, Lindsey, Keller, Dalmasse, Tate
Abstain: Keller

Moved by Sheaff, seconded by McComas
"Establish the Senate/House Leadership Bowls to recognize an Outstanding Senator and Outstanding Representative based on cumulative student ranking at the end of the preliminary session, semifinal session and final session."
Passed: 9-0

Student participants in the National Congress will have the opportunity to rank all fellow competitors at the end of each round (preliminary, semi-final, and final). Total cumulative rankings will determine the winners of each Leadership Bowl.

Moved by Wycoff, seconded by McComas
"Affiliate chapters (now referred to as provisional and membership chapters) shall be allowed to enter the same amount of Congressional Debate entries as charter chapters at the District Congress, based on the table in the manual."
Passed: 8-1
Aye: Wycoff, King, Sheaff, Lindsey, McComas, Keller, Dalmasse, McDonald
Nay: Tate

Note: This rule will go into effect for the current year as it affects the National Congress entry numbers.

Public Forum Debate

Mr. Sheaff, the Board liaison to the Public Forum Review and Recommendations Committee, presented the recommendations of the committee for consideration. The Board of Directors commended committee Chair Scott Ginger, Mr. Sheaff, and the rest of the committee on their outstanding work and passion for the event.

Moved by McComas, seconded by Wycoff
"In Public Forum Debate, change the time limit for the final focus to 2 minutes."
Passed: 9-0

Note: This rule will take effect this year at all district tournaments and the national tournament to allow for consistency.

The Board directed the Executive Director to work with some regular season tournaments to test the new proposed ballot concepts. Ballot language and event instructions will be reviewed and tested to determine the best course of action.

The Board directed the Executive Director to make the appropriate manual changes as recommended by the committee.

Moved by Wycoff, seconded by McComas
"The following language should be added to the sample ballots that will be tested.
"Crossfire time should be dedicated to questions and answers rather than reading evidence. Evidence may be referred to extemporaneously."
Passed: 9-0

Note: This motion is not an official rule change. This language will simply be added to the sample ballots for testing.

Moved by Wycoff, seconded by Crabtree
"The Board of Directors recommends that the Office of Executive Director take into consideration that, if Public Forum topic overlap between the Policy resolution occurs, it be limited to the first three months of the school year."
Passed: 9-0

School Membership System

Moved by McComas, seconded by Wycoff
"Create and enact a new three-tiered school membership system as outlined by the Executive Director. Define a small school as a school with an enrollment under 500. Implement this change throughout the current school year."
Passed: 9-0

A new school membership system was conceptualized and designed at the 2009 Summer Leadership Conference. Also, the definition of a small school (for the purpose of charter strength requirements) has been changed to include any school with a grade 9-12 enrollment under 500. See page 10 for a more specific description of the new school membership system.

Point System

Moved by King, seconded by Wycoff
"Change the current NFL point system to reflect the following point areas and point caps:"

Point Area	Maximum pts
Policy, PFD, and LD Debate	750
Speech Events	750
Congressional Debate	750
Service	750
Non-District/National Points Max	**1500**

Passed: 9-0

Based on strong feedback from the District Leadership Survey and Summer Leadership Conference, Congressional Debate will now be a separate point area. The overall non-district and nationals total point cap will remain at 1500 points.

Moved by Keller, seconded by Crabtree
"Raise overall points cap to 3,000 points effective the 2010-2011 school year."
Failed 2-6-1
Aye: Keller, Crabtree
Abstain: King

Interpretation Events

Moved by Wycoff, seconded by Sheaff
"Appoint a task force of NFL member coaches to further explore the use of Internet based literature, define the parameters of published material required for use in interpretation competition, and bring those recommendations to the Board by the fall of 2010."
Passed: 9-0

Portable Computers in Forensics

Moved by King, seconded by McComas
"Establish a summer 2010 committee to create sample policies concerning portable computer use in LD, PFD, Congressional Debate, and Extemp for review at the Fall 2010 Board meeting. This committee should also create a survey mechanism to be used by the National Office to allow district leadership the opportunity to provide feedback prior to the fall 2010 meeting."
Passed: 9-0

A committee will be asked to explore and create protocols for computer use in the above events. These protocols will be introduced to the NFL leadership for comment and feedback before being considered by the Board of Directors at its fall 2010 meeting.

Board Governance

Moved by McComas, seconded by Wycoff
"Adopt the Board of Directors Responsibilities and Expectations document as amended by the Governance Committee."
Passed: 9-0

See page 14 to review this document.

The Board of Directors adjourned at 5pm on October 3, 2009. ■

Restructuring NFL Chapter Schools

In its fall meeting on October 2-3, 2009, the NFL Board of Directors voted unanimously to restructure the League's chapter school program. Instead of a two-school concept (affiliate and charter), the NFL will immediately begin recognizing three types of chapter schools (provisional, member, and charter). Below is a description of the three types of chapter schools:

Provisional Chapter

A provisional chapter of the National Forensic League shall be a brand new member school, any school that has been a member school for less than three years, and any school whose membership in the League has lapsed for more than five years.

Provisional chapters are given voting rights of one-half their total member and degree strength in both district and national elections and shall count as one-half of a full charter chapter in determining whether or not a district has met the minimum requirement of 16 paid charter chapters.

A school can only remain a provisional chapter for three years before either being automatically granted charter status or becoming a member chapter.

Member Chapter

A member chapter of the National Forensic League shall be a school that has either completed its three years of provisional membership and has not met the minimum requirements for charter chapter honors, or is returning as a member chapter within five years of absence. Charter chapters that do not meet the minimum charter membership strength requirements over a three-year period are also moved to membership chapter status.

Member chapters are given the same voting rights at provisional chapters (one-half strength) but are not counted toward the district's charter chapter strength requirement of 16 paid charter schools.

If at any point, a member chapter meets the minimum requirements to become a charter chapter of the NFL, it will automatically be granted charter status.

Charter Chapter

A charter chapter shall be the highest school membership honor in the League. A school shall be automatically granted the honor of charter chapter once it has been a provisional or member chapter for at least 1 year and has met the minimum strength requirement of 50 members and degrees within a 3-year period. Small schools with a 9-12 grade enrollment of less than 500 students shall be required to earn 25 members and degrees within a 3-year period.

If a charter chapter does not meet the minimum strength requirements, it will be given one year of temporary charter status to meet the requirement before automatically being made a member chapter.

If a charter chapter is expelled for non-payment of dues, it may return as a charter chapter if it has been less than three years since last membership and all prior invoices (including missing year dues) are paid in full.

■ Those schools who have now qualified to become charter chapters will be notified in a timely fashion by the National Office. ■

Fall Board Meeting Debrief:
Understanding Changes to Congress

Senator John C. Stennis often advised people to "look ahead." In that spirit, students who participate in the NFL's district and national Congress chambers simulate the legislative process by attempting to solve problems and change the status quo for the better. Since the National Forensic League held its first Student Congress in Wooster, Ohio in 1938, it has undergone several evolutions and spun off a number of different local variations. Despite change, the event continues to hold true to its mission, "promoting leadership and communication skills through rigorous interaction and debate on issues confronting our democracy" and it remains the one event that uses a real-world framework as a platform for discourse.

The Board of Directors recently passed a number of changes in Congress: culminating more than three years of discussion by three different committees, review by district leadership from across the country at two separate leadership conferences, and an online survey. The changes address top concerns brought to board members and the National Office alike, driving the following goals:

1. Create parity and respect between Congress and other main events
2. Attempt to bring conflicting rules into alignment
3. Simplify polices and procedures at both the district and national tournaments
4. Establish consistency and transparency (ease of implementation) among district tournaments
5. Establish a Congressional Debate model for all parts of the United States

At its core, Congress remains the same student-centered event, especially at the local and district level. Students originate topics for debate by writing bills and resolutions, they set their own agenda, they serve as presiding officers, and they give speeches and vote in support or opposition of legislation under the framework of parliamentary procedure.

Congressional Debate

Robert's Rules of Order uses the term of art "debate" to refer to discourse in a deliberative assembly. This recognizes that Congress is not intended as an event where students bring speeches written before the tournament, word-for-word (except for introductory author/sponsor speeches). Actively listening and spontaneously responding to arguments through dynamic clash is a central component, rather than abiding "dueling oratories" and canned speeches. Students who build acumen in the event do so through a willingness to understand and be able to debate either side of an issue, just as with any other debate event (and students speak affirmatively or negatively). At the national tournament, participation in Congress already accrues points toward School of Excellence awards in debate.

Search the Web for "student congress" and some of the top hits are actually for student governments/councils. Participants role-play as senators and representatives, not high school students, so keeping "student" in the name is a disservice to that spirit. As it exists, Congress is unique among the NFL menu of events in providing a real-world framework for debate, and the name Congressional Debate allows us to better market the event to external publics.

In the end, what will coaches and students casually call it? "Congress." Just like we shorten "Policy Debate" to "Policy," "Extemporaneous Speaking" to "Extemp.," or "Original Oratory" to "Oratory."

Speaking of Time Limits

Three years ago, the Board of Directors added one minute of compulsory questioning at the end of speeches following the introductory speech (which still had two minutes). At that time, however, it did not alter the parameters for a chamber, not accounting for the impact this had on number of speeches, number of students in a chamber, and the total time allotted for floor debate. Therefore, parameters have now been defined for a session as having a minimum of three hours of floor debate, with 18-20 students, and requiring 10 additional

Time Frame for Changes

Point Recording: Immediately

National Tournament: June 2010 – Kansas City
Includes lifting of limit of four entries for affiliate chapters

District Tournament: 2010-2011 School Year

minutes for each participant added beyond 20. A session also includes the election of a new presiding officer, new seating chart, resetting of precedence/recency, and new legislation that has not previously been debated at that tournament (so a new judge wouldn't be expected to extrapolate debate on that issue that happened before s/he arrived).

Additionally, past protocols required a presiding officer to first recognize students who had not spoken, then to recognize students who had spoken fewer times, a convention referred to as *precedence.* A third level of recognition now requires the presiding officer to recognize those who have spoken earliest, known as *recency.* So, if four students stand for recognition: one has spoken three times and three have spoken twice, the presiding officer recognizes the student among the three who spoke twice that spoke least recently.

Point Recording

Even when ranks determine advancement, points awarded by judges for individual speeches or per hour of presiding will still determine a student's NFL credit points. What's more, Congressional Debate is now its own recording area, so a student can earn up to 750 non-district/national points in Congress, irrespective of service. This allows a service-minded student to still participate deeply in Congress, without losing the opportunity to log points in service. One of the reasons other organizations partner with NFL is because as an honorary society, the League encourages service. This gives service the separate recognition it deserves.

Tournament Procedures

One of the most common complaints regarding the NFL *Student Congress Manual* is how complicated the methods of advancement and recording of results is for the district tournament. For the past three years, 20 iterations of determining finalists and advancement to nationals continued to keep Congress inconsistent across the country. By far, coaches have expressed a desire for district qualification to mirror advancement at nationals, and for competitive equity. After analyzing the advantages and disadvantages of several different methods, a ranking system similar to what is used in speech events was adopted, which will also allow tabulation through software programs, such as *Joy of Tournaments.*

This ranking system will be in use at the 2010 National Congress, but will not take effect for district tournaments until the 2010-2011 school year. At the end of each scorer's judging commitment, s/he will rank his/her most preferred students in the chamber, and students with the lowest cumulative rank total advance to the next level of competition or place at the end of a tournament. Starting next school year, districts will retain the ***option*** of using **student ranking** to determine qualification and order of alternates to the National Congress: once judges' ranks are tabulated, a roster of nominees will be presented to students to rank, and those ranks will be tabulated for lowest cumulative rank total. Districts must continue to follow the current requirement of at least three judges, but may choose to use more to achieve a greater mathematical variance in ranking. Finally, districts will have the ability to appoint an impartial adult presiding officer as an alternative to student presiding officers.

Evaluation of debaters and presiding officers will be done using a new standardized ballot (facsimile to be published in the new manual). The evaluation form will ask scorers to take speeches, answers to questions, and even the quality and pertinence of *questions asked* into account when holistically ranking students at the end of a session. A scorer may decide that quality trumps quantity of participation, and can note this on the form.

Placement of six (instead of nine) finalists at the end of the Sen. John C. Stennis National Congressional Debate will be determined by tabulated judge ranks, with an expanded panel of judges that will include bipartisan chiefs of staff from the US Congress (with thanks to our valued partner, the Stennis Center for Public Service Leadership) and local legislators (no more than three on each panel).

The 2010 National Congress also marks the debut of Senate and House Leadership Bowls, awarded to one Senator and one Representative whose cumulative **student rank** totals from the preliminary, semifinal, and final sessions is a testament to the respect they command as leaders within their chambers. This effectively replaces the student vote at the end of the final session to determine the national champion and placement.

With these changes, the Base System is officially retired at the conclusion of the 2009-2010 district tournament series. While mathematically sound, a failure to understand the Base System has created so much discord, students would fixate on strategizing around it, and coaches would complain about how it was implemented in different areas.

Submission of legislation for the 2010 National Congress will feature changes. First, legislation that does not meet the existing guidelines published in the *Congressional Debate Manual* will be sent back to District Chairs for revision. Once the legislation has been assembled, an impartial committee will rank legislation to determine 25 items for preliminary sessions, and 12 for semifinals. The Stennis Center will assist in providing legislation for the final session. This process will ensure a higher standard for the quality of legislation debated at nationals, and will lessen the research burden and confusion over the previously designated Alpha and Omega dockets, as well as expediting the agenda-setting process at the beginning of prelims. Students whose district legislation is selected for prelims will have authorship privileges; any student may sponsor legislation in the semifinal and final sessions, provided they have appropriate precedence/recency, once that has been set.

Senator Robert Kennedy once said, "Progress is a nice word, but change is its motivator. And change has its enemies." For too long, Congress has suffered from a lack of consistency and uniform standards, presenting a disadvantage for students from areas that practiced their own standards. The changes passed will bring more uniformity, while still offering districts some flexibility to meet their own unique needs. ■

NATIONAL FORENSIC LEAGUE

Election Year for Board of Directors

Election of Board Members shall be conducted in even-numbered years as follows:

- Any member coach with five years of NFL coaching experience and any current or past District Chair may become a candidate for the Board of Directors by so advising the Executive Director in writing before February 1, 2010 **by certified mail.**
- Present members of the Board of Directors whose terms expire on July 31 shall become candidates for re-election by filing a written statement with the Executive Director by February 1, 2010 **by certified mail.**
- No person may be a candidate or serve as a member of the Board of Directors if he or she will reach 70 years of age before or during his or her term in office. This rule does not apply to the Administrative Representative who is appointed by the Board of Directors every two years.
- Each candidate shall be allotted one *Rostrum* column, unedited by the NFL National Office, to support his/her candidacy. The column must be no longer than 400 words in length and must be submitted in writing to the Executive Director by February 1, 2010 **by certified mail.** Each candidate may include a photo to accompany the column.
- Each provisional, member, and charter chapter school (see page 10) shall be mailed a ballot on which the candidates' names appear in an order drawn by lot and on which the school shall vote for four candidates. A chapter's active members and degrees (total strength) on record in the National Office on May 1, 2010 shall determine the number of votes it is allotted. A charter chapter will be granted the number of votes equal to its total strength. Provisional and member chapters shall be granted the number of votes equal to one-half its total strength.
- All seats are not up for election. Board members Don Crabtree, Harold Keller, Pamela McComas, and Timothy Sheaff were elected in 2006 and their seats are up for re-election in 2010.

Ballots will be mailed to schools in April of 2010.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the general time commitment as a member of the National Board of Directors?

Board members are expected to attend three regularly scheduled meetings. These meetings are scheduled by the Board and generally occur in early fall, late spring, and at the national tournament. The fall and spring meetings generally run two and a half days, and the national tournament meeting is a few hours on the day prior to registration day. In addition to meetings, Board members are periodically asked to participate in committee work and are sometimes asked to attend state conventions and workshops as representatives of the League.

What is the role and specific time commitment of a Board member at the national tournament?

Board members are asked to attend several public events during the day and in the evening, as well as serve various volunteer roles during the competition hours.

Is there a financial cost to being a Board member?

No stipend or salary is given to a member of the Board of Directors. However, travel expenses (related to Board member responsibilities) are paid by the League.

NATIONAL FORENSIC LEAGUE

Board of Directors

Responsibilities and Expectations

- **The Board determines the League's mission and purpose, and ensures effective organizational planning. Directors:**
  - Promote and uphold the mission, purpose, goals, policies, programs, services, strengths and needs; and
  - Serve as ambassadors by upholding the constitution and acting in a manner that is in the organization's best interest; and
  - Determine, monitor, and strengthen the organization's programs and services.

- **The Board governs the organization through broad policies and objectives and determines, monitors, and strengthens programs and services. Directors:**
  - Serve in leadership positions and undertake special assignments willingly and enthusiastically;
  - Prepare for and participate in three annual full Board meetings (mid-autumn, late spring, and the day before the national tournament), committees, and other organizational programs and activities;
  - Ask timely and substantive questions at meetings—consistent with their conscience and convictions—while supporting the majority decision on actions passed by the Board, as well as suggest agenda items as needed for meetings, ensuring that significant, policy-related matters are addressed;
  - Maintain confidentiality of the Board's closed executive sessions, adjudicate objectively on the basis of information received from individuals and urge those with grievances to follow established policies, and speak for the Board or organization only when authorized to do so;
  - Gain an awareness of trends in the field of forensics; and
  - Orient new Board members and evaluate Board performance.

- **The Board selects and removes the Executive Director, whose performance it evaluates. Directors:**
  - Counsel the Executive Director as appropriate and offer support during the variety of problem solving and public relations interactions that arise with groups and individuals; and
  - Refrain from requesting special information or projects from staff without first consulting the Executive Director.

- **The Board ensures legal and ethical integrity and maintains accountability. Directors:**
  - Serve the organization as a whole, rather than any special interest group or constituency, and maintain independence and objectivity, acting with a sense of fairness, ethics, and personal integrity; and
  - Uphold the premise that even the appearance of a conflict of interest that might bring harm to the Board or organization is undesirable, and will disclose any possible conflicts to the Board in a timely manner;
  - Seek advice from the Executive Director before accepting or offering gifts from or to anyone who does business with the organization.

- **The Board provides proper financial oversight, ensures adequate resources, and approves sale of League assets. Directors:**
  - Exercise prudence with the Board in the control and transfer of funds; and
  - Understand and evaluate the organization's financial statements and otherwise help the Board fulfill its fiduciary responsibilities.

- **The Board enhances the organization's public standing. Directors:**
  - Support the organization through annual giving according to personal means; and
  - Assist the Executive Director, Development Director, and Development Board by implementing fundraising strategies through personal influence with corporations, individuals, and/or foundations.

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How are YOU Giving Youth a Voice?

by Bethany Rusch

Bruno E. Jacob, NFL Founder

Sometimes in the busyness that defines the life of a forensics coach or student, one forgets he or she is part of a vast network of high schools, each an important part of the rich community that comprises the National Forensic League. With roots that run deep into time, the NFL stands today as a vibrant not for profit organization committed to serving its membership through growth and innovation. But if it were not for the pioneering efforts of Bruno E. Jacob, the NFL may never have existed to give over 1.3 million alumni their voice through speech and debate.

As a student at Ripon College in the 1920s, Jacob compiled a vest-pocket handbook entitled "Suggestions for the Debater" that attained national circulation. Shortly thereafter, Jacob received a letter inquiring if an honor society existed for high school debaters. There was no such society, so the young Jacob drafted and circulated a proposal for what would become the nation's oldest and largest high school debate and speech educational honor society—the National Forensic League. Jacob welcomed the first member school to the NFL on March 28, 1925. In the years that followed, Jacob worked tirelessly to expand the NFL into high schools across the country and in 1931 hosted the first National Tournament in Ripon, Wisconsin. In 1950, Jacob resigned his teaching position at Ripon College and devoted himself full-time to the NFL as the first Executive Secretary (now referred to as Executive Director). He traveled extensively to make personal visits to individual speech and debate programs around the country until his retirement.

Although one man's vital contributions to forensics cannot be adequately summarized in one short paragraph, this brief history reminds our community of nearly 100,000 students and 7,000 coaches that one determined individual worked to ensure there was the opportunity to participate in forensics. Jacob knew the secret to success—academically, interpersonally, and professionally—lay solely on the shoulders of speech and debate. He knew it within his soul and that knowledge motivated him to dedicate his life's work to giving youth a voice.

> YOU
>
> Individuals across the country are giving NFL **youth** a voice each day. Each month, an NFL giver will be featured in this format to highlight the incredibly **dedicated** efforts of parents, coaches, students, alumni, and other supporters. Our long-standing **tradition** of excellence in high school speech and debate education will shine through the stories of our lifeline—**YOU**.

Our students honor Jacob each time they compete, our coaches each time they persevere in battles to maintain and grow their programs, and our alumni each time they recognize the impact participation in forensics had upon their lives. The National Forensic League, just three years ago, began the Bruno E. Jacob Youth Leadership Fund to further honor the legacy of our founder. Hundreds of alumni, coaches, parents, and others in our forensic community give to this fund that rightly bears Jacob's name. The governing body and leadership of the National Forensic League participate at a rate of 100% in supporting this fund financially. Appropriately, the Bruno E. Jacob Youth Leadership Fund earmarks dollars that support the core work and mission of the NFL—competitive grants to districts to build participation, scholarships to schools and students with financial need, comprehensive coach education and professional development, and publicity/recognition for our deserving coaches and students to highlight their success, to name a few.

Please consider honoring the life and work of Bruno E. Jacob by contributing to his fund today. While he may have been a truly modest man, the NFL community will always be in his debt. From the NFL's humble beginnings to a future of limitless possibilities, it must be simply stated, "Thanks, Mr. Jacob. We hope you're proud." ■

About the Author

Bethany Rusch has been serving the League as Director of Development since July 2008, working to secure funds needed to support speech and debate education across the country.

Think someone you know should be featured here? E-mail ideas to Bethany.Rusch@nationalforensicleague.org

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Peacebuilding Following Conflict

The Stanley Foundation sponsored a conference on "Peacebuilding Following Conflict" to provide a forum for United Nations member states, officials from UN departments and programmes, and experts from leading US think tanks to assess efforts to date on peacebuilding, and to discuss the secretary-general's landmark report on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict. August 2009 conference report.

Weakest of Nations Pose Greatest Threats

The world has undergone a great transition from Cold War competition between two ideological, economic, and military blocs to a more complex security equation. We are experiencing a global surge in transnational, stateless, and nontraditional threats, often emanating from failed or fragile states such as Somalia or Pakistan.

This problem is not confined to any one region, culture, or nationality. It is a systemic ailment that threatens the very foundation of a healthy globalized order. April 2009 op-ed from the *Star Tribune*, by Michael Kraig.

The United Nations and the Responsibility to Protect

The 2005 World Summit's adoption of the responsibility to protect was an historic step in the evolution of human rights and humanitarian law. Much attention is focused on one aspect—forceful intervention—that creates political firestorms. However, responsibility to protect is richer, deeper, and more varied than forceful intervention. Much of what was articulated in the World Summit Outcome Document is not politically contentious, but rather requires further conceptual development and capacity building. This brief addresses the conceptual underpinnings of the responsibility to protect, the political importance of it, and the steps that need to be taken to make it operational. August 2008 analysis brief.

Additional reports and a wealth of other information are available at *reports.stanleyfoundation.org*.

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Fragile Nation States: A Threat to US National Security

by Dr. Michael Kraig

The recent uptick in ship seizures by Somali pirates underscores a new fundamental truth: The world's weakest nations pose the greatest global security threats, not the world's strongest.

There is now a new international effort to patrol the waters off Somalia, the east African nation that's become a glaring example of a failed state.

The world has undergone a great transition from Cold War competition between two ideological, economic, and military blocs to a more complex security equation. We are experiencing a global surge in transnational, stateless, and nontraditional threats, often emanating from failed or fragile states such as Somalia or Pakistan.

Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair recently testified to Congress that the leading threat to America is no longer terrorism but rather the economic crisis, which is leading to unrest, violence, and instability in a number of countries. "In recent years, it seems we've had more security problems from states that have been in trouble than we have from strong states that have been an adversary to us in the traditional way," Blair said.

The term "fragile state" includes the coexistence of weak central governments with opposing militias, drug lords, tribal affiliations, or other "centrifugal forces" on the nation's territory. It can include endemic civil violence over natural resources and commodities such as oil, and chronic religious or ethnic strife.

This problem is not confined to any one region, culture, or nationality. It is a systemic ailment that threatens the foundation of a healthy globalized order.

The danger that fragile states pose was also demonstrated in November 2008 in India's business capital of Mumbai, when a small group of gunman, acting with brutal efficiency and wielding the latest in small arms, wrought destruction in one of the world's most important trading and financial hubs. India is viewed as a future major power in Asia. Yet the small group that held one of its biggest cities hostage was financed and trained in a fragile Pakistani state.

The potential for future attacks is much greater than is the potential for traditional wars between nations like the United States and China. Yet, state weakness is something that the United States and its allies are still largely unprepared to either prevent or manage.

The United States assumes that most transnational problems like terrorism or piracy can be linked back to an enemy state with an irredeemable ideology. This thinking —focused on strong regional powers rather than on weak states—ultimately means the United States puts most of its budgetary and policy attention on the buildup and projection of military forces in key regions.

This was the Cold War script that prompted conventional and nuclear deployments in Europe and Asia and strong alliances such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. This thinking led the United States into Vietnam; resulted in nuclear buildups in the Kennedy and Reagan years; and led to US support for all stripes of dictators in the name of defeating communism across the globe. For better or worse, it was the basic approach to global security for 50 years.

The same script has been followed in the Middle East, by ousting Saddam Hussein and attempting to court "moderate" Arab regimes and a strong ally, Israel, to isolate and weaken Syria and Iran.

Unfortunately, military actions have the effect of increasing a nation's probability of state failure. That's the long-term cost paid for short-term gains against existing terrorist cells. The ultimate effect is to make disorderly regions of the developing world even more disorderly, increasing the chances of economic chaos, terrorism, and illicit trafficking in material goods and human beings.

We've heard the new administration talk of "smart power" and the need for multilateral action. That's a start, but we'll need to get beyond buzzwords. It will require serious adjustments to military training and deployments, foreign-aid programs, and diplomacy. But first, the right questions must be asked. ■

About the Author

Dr. Michael Kraig is senior fellow at the Stanley Foundation in Muscatine, Iowa. The Stanley Foundation promotes public understanding, constructive dialogue, and cooperative action on critical international issues. In his role at the foundation, Dr. Kraig undertakes policy research, analysis, and dialogue in Washington, DC, and foreign capitals, as well as actively engaging citizens across the US. His expertise includes human protection issues such as the implementation of the responsibility to protect and peacebuilding frameworks. He has a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University at Buffalo, New York, with a concentration in International Relations, US Foreign Policy, and Comparative Politics. This article was adapted from an op-ed published in the *Star Tribune* in April 2009.


"Poverty is the worst kind of violence."
Mahatma Gandhi

POVERTY

Cover Story

Poverty in our Schools:
Forensics as a Possible Solution

by Adam Jacobi and Jenny Corum Billman

Poverty is a highly personal and sensitive state of being for families ensnared by it. Saddled with the inability to meet their basic needs, people across the world and in our own communities struggle to preserve their spirit and sometimes, their lives. Poverty is such a consuming social issue that the federal government spends billions of dollars to combat it each year (Poverty, 2009). In the United States, the scope of poverty reaches from inner cities to rural areas, and with a weakened economy and high unemployment rates, the magnitude of poverty is growing.

It is fitting then, that the subject of poverty has been a focal point for the high school debate community this school year. Because poverty dehumanizes people and places an enormous strain on the economy, policy experts and social activists alike have sought for years to find solutions. Education is seen as a ladder students can use to climb out of poverty, but the lowest rungs on that ladder are all too often deteriorated.

In an investigative report of poverty in inner city schools, *Milwaukee Magazine* illuminated how bleak the reality is for some young people: "Many have never seen their birth parents. Some parents are in jail, others addicted to alcohol or drugs." It describes how one "student lived in an empty warehouse with a two-year-old for five weeks until McDonald's staff saw him scavenging for food in the dumpster" (Van de Kamp Nohl, 69). Other research notes that "More students live in poverty and lack health care than was true 35 years ago. Nearly one-fourth of US children live in families below the poverty line, more than in any other industrialized nation" (Democracy at Risk, iii).

(continued on next page)

Teaching and Learning

No Child Left Behind (NCLB), for all of its criticism, does provide stark data on poverty and the associated achievement gap. Not surprisingly, the highest incidence of failing schools comes from areas of poverty. Public schools are most often funded by property taxes, and so schools which need the most resources for dealing with poverty also are stuck in a cycle of poverty from a lack of tax base revenue. The taxpayer bill of rights movement that froze tax rates in some areas within the last 10-15 years exacerbates this situation. The result is districts with high teacher attrition, skyrocketing class sizes, and not enough funds to purchase textbooks, basic classroom supplies such as paper, or services for students with special needs.

The sad irony is that NCLB expects schools to close the achievement gap, but it leaves funding up to states. In some states, affluent areas mere miles from depressed neighborhoods enjoy a robust tax base and therefore, schools that are monuments to the funding they are able to provide. Meanwhile, nearby districts languish in poverty. While progressives have advocated shared revenue programs among municipalities, critics call such programs "socialism" that amounts to a Robin Hood notion of stealing from the rich to give to the poor.

Signs of poverty are sometimes obvious, but more often subtle. The National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program are two mainstays of fighting hunger in children, one of the most pronounced symptoms of poverty. Any educational psychology text underscores the importance of nutrition for development of the brain and a student's ability to think and concentrate. In that same vein, educators understand Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs model, and how it applies to the psychology of teaching and learning.

As educator Karen Pellino writes in online resource Teachnology, "High-mobility is a symptom of poverty and its surrounding social factors. Children of poverty may live in places that rent by the week or even day. They may move from town to town as their parent searches for work or runs from problems (such as an abusive spouse, criminal record, financial responsibilities)… The conditions they live in and their day-to-day life experiences can have a significant effect on their education and achievement. Moving is a very emotional event for children. Combine this issue with the multitude of other issues faced by mobile and homeless children and the impact on their emotional, social and cognitive development can be overwhelming" (Pellino, 2007). Pellino continues with discussions of brain-based research, citing environmental factors of both upbringing and classroom climate as affecting the quality of learning and emotional and cognitive development.

Understanding Poverty

In her book, *A Framework for Understanding Poverty* (1996), Ruby Paine, Ph.D., delves deeper into the factors which may contribute to poverty. She observes that the disadvantaged typically suffer from a shortage of physical resources; however, "the reality is that financial resources, while extremely important, do not explain the differences in the success with which individuals leave poverty nor the reasons that they may stay in poverty" (Payne, 1996, p. 16-17). Access to other mainstays, including emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical reserves; support systems; relationships/role models; and knowledge of hidden rules, affect whether a student can break free from poverty. Mindful of these critical needs, Payne suggests that educators "have tremendous opportunities to influence some of the non-financial resources that make such a difference in students' lives" (p. 39).

To facilitate the life-changing role of educators, Payne conducts interactive school faculty in-service programs through her aha! Process company. In the spirit of Maslow's hierarchy, the in-service asks participants to assess how they would survive in poverty, asking who would know how to find substitute resources for amenities middle class persons take for granted. Payne also includes inventories of survival in the middle class, and "survival" (quotation marks used as tongue-in-cheek) in a life of wealth.

Extending examination of psychology to communication and sociology, Payne takes also takes participants on a journey of understanding how the use of language influences understanding particular social norms. In her book, Payne explains that students in poverty use language differently than their middle-class peers, speaking primarily in the casual register. This vernacular is denoted by a 400 to 800 word vocabulary, general word choices, and frequent incomplete sentences. In contrast, survival among the middle class—including success on standardized tests and the ability to secure a well-paying job—hinges on the use of the formal language, designated by specific word choices and complete sentences (1996, p. 42). This discrepancy further disenfranchises those suffering from poverty, because they lack the command of formal language to advocate for themselves properly in school or the workplace.

Students in poverty also face inherent disadvantages in the testing sphere. Payne writes that many tests fail to measure potential for achievement because they measure a rather subjective knowledge base. A more complete view would evaluate learning structures instead of content. Education research in the past two decades has indicated that instruction is more successful when it is carefully designed to build schemas toward specific outcomes. This informs school districts—and those who make funding decisions—what is most important, any why. More to the point, this research underscores the importance of fostering higher order thinking (HOT) and teaching young people to think and learn at the highest levels of Bloom's Taxonomy, rather than simply using rote memorization of facts.

Interestingly, researchers note that "Of nations participating in PISA [Program for International Student Assessment], the US is among those where two students of different socio-economic backgrounds have the largest difference in expected scores… The United States not only has the highest poverty rates for children among advanced nations… it also provides fewer resources for them at school… as we under-invest in children, an increasing share of our government funds is spent on incarceration rather than education—a fact highly correlated with education, as most inmates are high school dropouts, and more than half the adult prison population possess literacy skills below those required by the labor market" (Democracy at Risk, 7-8).

Tony Wagner's *The Global Achievement Gap* (2008), reviewed in October's Rostrum, echoes Payne's criticism of high-stakes, standardized tests and advocates for meaningful, authentic instruction and assessment. He writes, "Work, learning, and citizenship in the twenty-first century demand that we all know how to think—to reason, analyze, weigh evidence, problem solve—and to communicate effectively. These are no longer skills that only the elites in a society must master; they are essential survival skills for all of us" (xxiii, emphasis added). Likewise, self-improvement coach

David Allen cites in his book, *Getting Things Done,* how workflow in the 21st century is all about thinking and ideas, rather than oriented by tasks. Yet education remains largely intransigent in the face of this compelling research.

Strategic Solutions

Payne writes, "The true discrimination that comes out of poverty is the lack of cognitive strategies. The lack of these unseen attributes handicaps in every aspect of life the individual who does not have them" (1996, p. 139, emphasis author's). She proposes that students in poverty must be taught cognitive strategies—*how* to think—before they are expected to retain content knowledge. Among her litany of cognitive strategies are skills practiced in forensics: verbal tools, organization, and a systematic method of exploration (p. 123). In fact, other researchers have formally noted what educators observe daily; that forensics imparts to students new tools for synthesizing information (Bellon, 2000).

Payne also discusses a lack of emotional control as worn away or not developed in young people in poverty, which may contribute to impulsive behavior. Disciplinary problems often result, including arguing with the teacher or physically fighting (1996, p. 103). Payne's solution, again, hinges on developing proficiency in language. By learning to verbalize problems and identify potential solutions, students in poverty can acquire a valuable tool for surviving in the middle class (p. 106-107). By building communication skills, forensics provides a powerful way to accomplish this goal. Not surprisingly, research has affirmed that forensics education has reduced disciplinary problems by as much as half among participating students (Glanton, 2005).

Payne argues that teachers from all disciplines should engender a better literacy of speaking and listening (something teachers in the speech and debate fields have said for years), especially for young people living in poverty. In this vein, forensics provides a unique opportunity to teach students how to speak in the formal register. Whether they are constructing a speech, developing an argument, analyzing literature or evaluating current events, students in forensics must develop proficiency in precise, thoughtful language. For some, this skill will assist in securing a superior rank, scholarship, or job. For others, it can mean the ability—for the first time—to access the resources of the middle class.

Promising new research affirms that forensics can fulfill the recommendations established by Payne and Wagner. More important, it can do so in a more targeted, methodical way that traditional forms of education. For this reason, speech and debate education should be considered as a way to combat the poverty cycle among children and teens. The scholastic benefits of speech and debate activities are many; see **www.nflonline.org/AboutNFL/Advocate** for several research-based materials that support this position. In October's *Rostrum*, Colorado coach Tammie Peters shared her Master's paper connecting forensics and achievement, and the data is encouraging. Beyond the data, forensic activities simply empower young people by giving them a voice to advocate for themselves. This is particularly important for students who are entrapped by poverty.

We have long known that forensics makes a difference in the lives of those who participate. However, forensics may also fulfill the needs of children in poverty, as established in new educational research, in a way that other programs and interventions simply cannot. To some extent, the familial atmosphere forensics provides may be a welcome escape and foster the Maslowian sense of belonging that kids need.

As the issue of poverty is discussed in debate rounds throughout the country this year, we owe it to Americans in need to take the discussion beyond the classroom. It is time that we extend the life-changing benefits of forensics to the most vulnerable members of society in a systemic, inclusive way.

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Recruiting and Fundraising Through Your Own Middle School Camp

by Caroline Tan

One of the best ways for high school students (who are involved in the National Forensic League) to spend their summer is to organize a week-long speech and debate summer cam for middle school students as doing so not only sharpens speech and debate skills through creating course curricula, but also acts as a phenomenal fundraiser, generating revenue that can then be used towards coach salaries, travel tournaments, and much more.

Planning a speech and debate summer camp is, undoubtedly, a tricky business, especially if this is the first time your team is organizing one of these opportunities. As one of the main organizers for the Lynbrook speech and debate summer camp this year. I know from experience that undergoing such an effort takes organization, responsibility, and good planning. However, despite the hard work involved, the benefits of such an endeavor far outweigh the costs introducing students to speech and debate at an early age. This year, the inaugural Lynbrook speech and debate camp generated $9000 and had over 60 middle school students sign up (one even flying in from Los Angeles) showcasing exactly how effective and beneficial such a camp can be.

The best advice I can give regarding planning such a camp is to **start early**. Going through the school administration, publicizing effectively, and getting together all of the details takes a surprisingly long amount of time, so if you do decide to plan such a camp, you need to begin ASAP. Don't procrastinate. To help you, I've put together a few specific tips on planning such a program.

First, you need to pick out the date and time of your camp, making sure that it doesn't conflict with any other school-sponsored activities (such as band camp, freshman orientation, etc) as well as any common traveling periods (Fourth of July, etc.) Our camp this year took place from August 10-14 sufficiently close enough to the first day of school to ensure that the majority of students would be back from vacation yet far enough to prevent conflicts with other school activities. Check your school Web site for important dates, such as freshman orientation, and make sure that your camp doesn't conflict with any of those you don't want to put people in a position where they have to choose between attending your speech and debate camp or a school activity. Instead, make it easy for them to decide: don't let you camp conflict with any other major events.

Next, you need to determine the price of your camp. The amount of your charge should be proportional to the length of the camp, the number of hours every day, the experience of the camp instructors, and the life of the camp program itself. For instance, the Lynbrook speech and debate

camp lasted for one working week (Monday to Friday) from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm. Our instructors were primarily Lynbrook speech and debate alumni as well as incoming seniors with considerable national and local circuit experience; nevertheless, most were high school or college students, making high prices difficult as we lacked the solid credibility to charge substantially high rates. As a result, we charged $150 for the entire week, primarily because this was the inaugural year of the camp and we didn't want to overcharge; we preferred instead to start low, teach well, and raise the prices for the upcoming years. Nevertheless, we still made approximately $9000 for the camp, a considerable amount of money that will undoubtedly go towards team expenses.

One of the most important steps in planning such a camp is ensuring that your school administration is receptive to the idea. Therefore, it's a good idea to meet with the Activities Director of your school and ask him or her directly for permission to use the campus for your proposed camp. You should start off by telling him or her how valuable speech and debate is to a student's intellectual growth, emphasizing the research skills, public speaking abilities, and writing abilities involved. Once that is done, you should list the various awards that your team has won in the last couple of years, as doing so gives credibility to your team and encourages the Activities Director to realize the strength of your program.

Garnering the support of your school administration would make it easier for you to book classrooms for your camp as well as deal with administrative issues (such as medical insurance forms, etc). This year, we reserved five classrooms in Lynbrook High School from August 10-14 (the dates of the camp), ensuring that we would have a venue and location to teach students. I would suggest finding out the maximum number of people each room holds, estimating the number of people you expect to attend the camp, and then **book the appropriate number of rooms.** It's difficult to change reservations once you've already made them, so make sure the number of rooms you reserve is proportionate to the number of students you expect to receive. The benefits of booking rooms at your school rather than a separate venue is that it

a) grants legitimacy to your camp by affiliating the program to an accredited high school and

b) usually costs next to nothing if the team is an on-campus organization.

Keep in mind, however, that many times school administrations require a district employee to serve as an adult chaperone for all camp activities, so talk to your Head Coach or a school teacher about chaperoning for the camp. Offer compensation if you can't find somebody willing to chaperone for free, as you absolutely need an adult supervisor to oversee the camp. Most parents are unwilling to send their kids somewhere without an adult chaperone present.

Once rooms are decided and the school administration authorizes the camp, you will want to put in as much effort as possible to **publicize, publicize, publicize.** Create a Web site so interested students and parents can easily look up camp information. **Figure out the payment system.** For instance, Lynbrook speech and debate used Google Checkout this year, allowing parents to pay online and transfer the money directly into the team bank account. Although this Google Checkout does expect a commission fee per transaction, the convenience of such a process outweighs the small fee as it encourages more parents to apply. Alternatively, you can have parents bring a check on the first day of camp or mail the check to a specified address; however, this would involve a considerable amount of extra work, so if you do choose to take this path, make sure your records regarding who is paid and who hasn't are extremely accurate.

So, a Web site is clearly one of the more effective ways to advertise your camp. It's easy to create, and, if well-organized, can convey important information in only a few keystrokes. The Lynbrook speech and debate camp Web site was **www.camp.lynbrooksd.com/**, easy enough to remember and extremely powerful in terms of advertising. Also, we created hundreds of flyers, passing them to middle school students after they finished class in order to generate more interest in the program.

Undoubtedly, however, the method that worked the best was **contacting the local newspaper** and getting them to do a story on the Lynbrook speech and debate camp. A parent of one of our team embers had a contact in the *World Journal*, the largest Asian American newspaper publication in the San Francisco Bay Area. The newspaper reached a sizable adult population and was widely read by many parents in the area. I contacted one of the writers for the paper and give her a one-page description of the camp along with my contact information, should she choose to do an article on the program. She did, and called me a few days later to determine more information regarding the logistics of the camp and the benefits of high school speech and debate in general. Once this newspaper article went out (on March 22), the number of students registered for our camp shot up. I got at least five calls every day from parents all over the district asking about the camp as well as registration information. In only a few months, we had over 60 students signed up to attend.

This goes to show, that the most effective publicity methods are the ones that **appeal directly to parents,** since parents are not only the ones ultimately paying for the camp, but also those who tend to encourage their kids to try various summer activities and programs. Therefore, when you publicize, it is important to keep in mind what the parents want, since their say is ultimately going to determine whether or not you get students registered.

After you get the ideal number of students (if you don't continue to advertise), it is time to work on the course curriculum. **Determine who will teach each class and how exactly the lessons will run.** It would help to **create a take-home course packet** as well; doing so would provide something concrete for their parents to see and understand. Moreover, providing such a packet allows parents to get an idea of what their child has been doing for the past week, increasing the legitimacy of the camp as well as the chances that they will register again should you decide to organize another summer camp for the following year.

When planning lessons, you need to schedule exactly what will be taught in each room and during each hour. Rooms with younger students should involve more general lessons, while those holding the older students might be able to review more complicated speech and debate strategies. Don't forget that these students might be able to review more complicated speech and debate strategies. Don't forget that these are middle school students you're instructing, so going into the complex details regarding debate theory or speech nuances will probably just go in one ear and out the other. I would recommend keeping the lessons basic; focus more in impromptu speaking rather than technical terms. Save the technicalities for when they join the speech and debate team in high school. When you do finish the lesson plans and course packet, make sure that more than one person sees the final products, as these two things will be the primary things by which parents assess the success of the program and therefore the sustainability of the summer camp for future years.

Once you have a good course packet and lesson plan you're ready to go! Just make sure to **constantly update the parents** (you should have received their emails while they were registering) on the progress of their students as well as any other important notices. It would be a good idea to write some sort of liability form, as accidents do happen and you don't want to be held responsible;. The best way to avoid such accidents, however, is through good planning. Make sure you have a sufficient number of responsible students at the cam ensuring that all students are looked after and taught. If there are any forms you want parents to fill out or if you want them to print out the course packet, please make sure to email them all of the information at least a week in advance, and send a reminder e-mail the day right before the camp. It never hurts to double-check!

This basically sums up the general, camp-planning agenda. I hope this article helps you organize your thoughts regarding camp planning, if you decide that this is something you want to do. I encourage you to begin as soon as possible. The most important thing to keep in mind when it comes to planning a camp is to **start early**. Some of the above plans of action take an enormous amount of time, and if you want a successful camp, you need to complete things way ahead of time in order to ensure enough time for publicity and spreading the word. All of my tips come from personal experience, as I recently just finished planning the details of the Lynbrook speech and debate camp. As difficult as the planning was, however, I enjoyed every minute of it. These camps are great ways to start recruiting members, expose students to speech and debate at an early age, and raise money for the team. Besides, it's always worth a shot. ■

About the Author

Caroline Tan is a senior at Lynbrook High School and the President of the Lynbrook Speech and Debate team in San Jose, California, where she has been actively involved in Lincoln Douglas since her freshman year.

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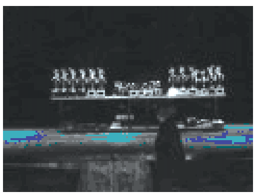

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Can I Shake My Binder?

by Travis Kiger

I was a senior in high school when I first dabbled in a wonderfully foreign mode of performance called Oral Interpretation. I was to hold a binder and read from it—50% of the time. I was not to move my lower body. I was to never act and I was to never…never use the binder as a prop…because that was against the rules. "Well," I thought, "that's pretty complicated." Ten years have gone by since that confusing time, and I've heard of lots of rules. Unfortunately, most of these "rules" have been just that…hearsay.

Now, still dabbling in Oral Interpretation (OI), this time as a coach, I still encounter these rules…this time as written by judges of my students and used as a platform for OI protests. I see the comments: "Cannot move lower body." "May not pop." "This is not an acting event." "Not reading 50/50." "CANNOT USE THE BINDER AS A PROP!" After seeing these comments on ballot after ballot, I decided to look at the actual rules for myself. To my surprise, none of these "rules" were listed in the very handy and accessible organizational handbook. I did find a rule that read, "No props of any kind are permitted with the exception of the speaker's manuscript." Well, this led me to think, "Maybe we are meant to use the manuscript as much as possible." After all, it is the presence and emphasis on this manuscript that inherently prevents oral interpers from acting. As long as the binder is present, the student is exhibiting a presentational mode of performance…where they present, albeit similarly, life experiences and themes, but they do not represent them as an actor would…unless the character presented was holding a binder at the time. When my students have rumbling in their literature, I tell them to shake the heck outta that binder. This is performing an interpretation of the literature. Why wouldn't the student use the binder? It's there. Is shaking it to symbolize rumbling any different then turning the page to symbolize transition? I find that judging competitors by convention, rather than rule, inhibits very important components of our forensic culture: fairness and innovation. As forensics is a capitalistic device of research, these components are the building blocks by which the activity was built, and each is essential to the success of our scholastic competitive oral tradition.

When I discuss such bylaws with fellow coaches, I often hear, "Well, the rules are subject to interpretation." But I don't think they are at all. Certainly, interpretations can be derived from the rules by applying practiced conventions…but this gets dangerous. When coaches apply convention as rule in determining round outcome, students get hurt. Challenging or penalizing the outcome of a student's performance based on a convention creates an unfair system. The conventions are not taught in all classrooms, and the students only have the rules to go by. We can only responsibly judge performances using the rules given. If you are a coach that has only experienced this activity through an oral passing down of conventions, then perhaps it is time to dust off that old internet and search the NFL and CFL bylaws.

As many of us have been involved in this activity since the beginning of forever, we have certainly seen some amazing things, perhaps even astonishing ourselves once in a while. One of the moments that got me hooked on forensics is when I first saw a student do something that made me think, "Wow! That was cool!" We are constantly looking for new ways to communicate with each other. And we compete so that we can capitalize on this amazing marketplace of ideas we call forensics. This exchange of creative capital can only move forward with the support of innovation. Each year, new students are thinking of performance devices that I never knew existed. They are reading the rules and testing them. They are pushing competitive performance to the limit. This warms and inspires me. Focus on innovation pushes our students to think beyond what has been done before. It pushes them to think beyond what they once thought was possible. When we enforce old performance conventions, we stifle this innovative spirit and we narrow the potentially amazing marketplace of ideas.

As we move forward in forensics together, and old conventions dissipate into washes of myth, I hope we continue to focus on education. I hope that coaches will join me in allowing conflicting conventions to "play out in the round" by rewarding performances of merit with accolade, rather than punishing them with reprimand. I hope we engage this wonderfully subjective activity with honorable consideration for the rules, and not contempt armed with convention. I hope that when your own student asks, "May I shake my binder?" you answer, "Yes. Shake the heck outta that thing." ■

About the Author

Travis Kiger has been a forensic coach since 2000. He is currently in his fourth year coaching at Nova HS, FL. He also coaches at the Florida Forensic Institute. As a student, Kiger competed at Fountain View HS in LA and at Louisiana State University.

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What Should Debate be About?

The outcome of the plan's enactment should be the focus of the debate.

by Michael Greenstein

Last year alone, while judging high school and college debate, I have probably judged at least two hundred Policy rounds. In all of these debates, the question of "what the framework for the debate should be" has come up more than seventy-five percent of the time. The problem is common; I have talked to many judges about what they hear in Policy debate rounds as they relate to framework. Regardless of whether judges lean toward Policy debate, kritik debate, or do not care what is debated, they all share the common sentiment of hating framework debates because all framework debates are the same: everyone reads the same stale, poorly impacted 2AC block which ends up being largely irrelevant to the round. Since the question of what the debate should be about seems fundamental to every single debate round, the judging community's hatred for framework debates must be irritating for debaters. This article aims to provide a basic view of what debates should be about. This view seems obvious, yet is rarely if ever articulated by affirmatives in framework debates.

The outcome of the plan's enactment should be the focus of the debate, not the entire 1AC or its framing. To win the debate, the affirmative should have to prove the plan would *cause* (not *justify*) a world better than the status quo or a competitive alternative. The negative should have to prove the plan would *cause* (not *justify*) something worse than the status quo or a competitive alternative (of course there is still and should be debate about presumption, but that is an issue separate from the point of this article).

This framework for debate is good for a few reasons. First, it provides a stable focus for the debate. The plan does not change; it is a stable text. The rest of the 1AC, the first affirmative's representations, and the way affirmative frames the 1AC is not static, but constantly changing. The 1AC is only eight minutes long and is by no means a complete or accurate picture of how the affirmative views the world. To hold the affirmative accountable for something that is unsubstantiated and inexplicit about their advocacy or beliefs seems unfair and irresponsible. This stable focus, of course, provides the negative with a constant target to attack throughout the entire debate.

Second, alternative frameworks create bad models for quality, educational decision-making. Not only would an alternative framework allow a judge to reject the affirmative even though he or she knows the plan is a good idea, but it would also allow a judge to vote for the affirmative even though he or she knows the plan is bad idea (because the way it was framed was good). This creates irrational decision-making that would never and should never occur in the real world.

Third, this framework allows for critical arguments. In fact, in this framework, the distinction between "critical" and "policy" arguments seems relatively silly; if the argument responds to the plan and proves why the plan would cause something bad, then it is a relevant consideration for the ballot no matter what type of argument it is. For example, if the negative could win that the way the affirmative represents something would cause policymakers to enact the plan poorly, then the judge should evaluate that particular argument. Of course, the specificity of the negative's claim would likely determine how much weight a judge assigns to a particular argument, so claims like "the plan causes serial policy failure" would likely not be valued as much as a specific affirmative solvency claim since "serial policy failure" (absent a specific example or more explanation) is vague and amorphous.

Fourth, who cares what the 1AC justifies? Really. During framework debates, many students frequently argue that the logic and framing of the 1AC is the logic of the Holocaust. Students come up with various reasons that have no adequate warrant or evidence to support their claims. Some are as absurd as "affirmatives try to create the most strategic policy possible and Hitler created the most strategic Holocaust possible, therefore the affirmative justifies the Holocaust." People can always find reasons why the logic behind a policy or the framing of it is analogous to the logical or framing of a bad historical event (especially if judges continue to accept and value these weak assertions). In any event, these are not reasons why the plan would cause something bad to occur if implemented and therefore should not be considered by judges when evaluating debates.

My hope is that the aforementioned comments will create discussions among debaters and judges about making and evaluating arguments regarding the purposes of the debate. This by no means is a comprehensive defense of why debate should focus on the outcome of the plan's enactment or my view of how debate has to (or should) be; it is merely a suggestion for how affirmatives can alter their framework arguments to be more unique and perhaps more useful. Since questions of what the debate should be about are important, debaters need to find better ways to convince judges to vote on them or even listen to debates about them at all. ■

About the Author

Michael Greenstein was the former Director of Debate at Georgetown University in Washington, DC, and is currently the Director of Debate at Glenbrook North High School in Northbrook, IL.

In Favor of Irony

by Nick J. Sciullo

I am one of the relatively few people in Virginia that bemoan the movement away from Policy debate in high school. I understand why stalwarts in the debate community might feel that classic style Policy debate or Public Forum debate have merits, but I have not been persuaded by those arguments. Arguments, both for and against, classic or contemporary style Policy debate have been hotly contested and rehashed on message boards, in newsletters and magazines, and at tournaments for years. I fall squarely into the contemporary Policy camp. I believe high school debate should not only make students better researchers and speakers, but also prepare them for success in college debate. The differences in high school debate experience do manifest themselves in college debate rounds. It is relatively easy to single out a debater as a former Lincoln-Douglas or Public Forum debater when judging them in college. I want to leave this larger discussion aside, however, and advocate for a specific type of what has come to be known as a performance affirmative: irony.

Debating an ironic affirmative is nothing new. When I coached at Midlothian High School in Chesterfield County, Virginia, we ran an ironic affirmative and did quite well with it. This was at a time shortly after I had won a Virginia High School League State Championship running kritiks and counterplans (and of course the requisite theory). Times were changing though, and the space for these arguments to flourish was lessoning on the local (Virginia) stage. While Virginia's trends do not necessarily equate to the trends in other states or to competition on the national level, there is a real danger that we are robbing high school students of not only success in college debate, but also in new and interesting philosophical and policy arguments.

Many college teams have embraced performance affirmatives incorporating everything from irony to hyperbole, hip-hop to cross-dressing. Ironic affirmatives do not need new space in the debate activity, but do need to be nurtured as a viable option for advocacy. This is not new ground in debate, nor is it new ground in rhetorical theory. We're not blazing trails, but rediscovering friendly paths. Here I do not plan to offer a full exposition on irony's value, but instead to illuminate several key factors that highlight irony's viability in debate rounds.

What is irony?

Although definitions are always slippery fish, one definition of irony seems to shine through. The Roman orator Quintilian described irony as simply saying what is contrary to what is meant. If that sounds like the colloquial conception of irony you've always had, then we're on the correct trajectory. Too often performance affirmatives are bogged down in theory and it is this reliance on theory that turns many critics away. Too often debate coaches are trained as English or government teachers and lack the educational foundation in rhetorical theory and philosophy. That's no dig against those teachers or those subjects, but even some of the best English programs deal only scantly with rhetoric as a discipline. Additionally, some debate coaches have no debate experience, which may manifest itself in a preference for classic style Policy, Lincoln-Douglas, or Public Forum debate. What performance affirmatives must do is engage the critic and encourage the critic that theory and performance can be educational, fun, and persuasive. Irony need not be confusing and one need not obscure its power by over-analyzing the finer points of theory.

In debate rounds, hyperbole and satire often pass for irony. While those rhetorical devices are technically different, it is important all the same to recognize the power of wordplay and the political potential such rhetorical devices contain. This is common sense. In our daily lives as we work and play, listen to music, watch the nightly news, and relax with a good sitcom, we are inundated with irony, satire, and hyperbole. "Don't let the big words throw you off," I've often told debaters, "you know these rhetorical devices very intimately." Let popular music be your guide! Hip-hop artist Eminem tells us, "My words are weapons, I use them to crush my opponents" and singer/songwriter Jason Mraz reminds us that, "It's all about the wordplay."

If a debate round spirals into a definitional battle over what is and is not irony, then it seems both the affirmative and negative have missed the mark. The affirmative has failed because they have lost their focus on performing the affirmative and the negative has failed because they have neither engaged the substantive case, the framework, or the theory of irony.

What evidentiary base exists for advocating irony?

Any debate strategy requires a base of evidence from which to support a team's arguments. This evidence might be your standard newspaper articles and law reviews or it might be the more contested music, blogs, and personal narratives. Evidence matters and running an ironic affirmative does not allow debaters to avoid the burdens of case specific research. There is a broad body of scholarship on irony that spans English, drama, philosophy, and linguistics. Perhaps most readily available and easily understood is Linda Hutcheon's *Irony's Edge: The Theory and Politics of Irony* (1994). Hutcheon gives the most thorough treatment of irony's power and extends the arguments for irony beyond the mere descriptive and analytical to the political. She posits that irony is an event with political significance and that ironists are in fact political actors. As such, the ironist-debater is engaging in a uniquely political practice in a uniquely political space. Debate teaches students to be political, why not be willing to accept a certain type of political framework even if we are not sure whether it comports with our own notion of political action?

Prior to Hutcheon, Søren Kierkegaard's *The Concept of Irony* did an admirable job of tracing irony from antiquity to the present (Kierkegaard's present was the mid-1800s). I doubt he's on many high school reading lists, but debate provides the co-curricular possibility of expanding research and thought beyond often restrictive public school curriculums. Recently Kierkegaard has garnered more attention from the debate community particularly for his writings on suffering. With this rekindled interest in suffering there comes tremendous discursive space to engage irony. We need not think of the theory of suffering and the theory of irony as two separate movements in Kierkegaard's writings, but instead should embrace them together and see how we can reconfigure our suffering into a more political act. For example: Reading Kierkegaard through Hutcheon may give us the micro-political impetus to not only accept our suffering, not only to embrace it, but to turn it into fuel for our personal politics.

Wayne Booth's *A Rhetoric of Irony* (1974) and Claire Colebrook's *Irony: The New Critical Idiom* (2004) are also instructive. Add to these monumental texts the host of scholarly journal articles and readily-available Internet material and there is more than enough to argue both the affirmative and negative. Arguing irony is based in sound and expansive scholarly writing. Evidence should not be an impediment to the successful use of irony in an affirmative case and plan.

How does one judge irony?

Unlike Justice Potter Stewart's oft-quoted maxim, "I know it when I see it," irony is much harder to find. Irony does not develop in a debate round without what are called "verbal and non-verbal markers." These are the winks, nods, coughs, hand clapping, and tumbles that denote a change in the speech act. Often non-verbal, changes in speed, pitch, and inflection can also denote a change to and from the ironic. Verbal markers help clue the listener into the ironic presentation. Without markers an affirmative would likely sound just like a negative to a critic and lose the "irony good" ground. If the critic does not understand that debaters are being ironic, it will not matter if the debaters win solvency on irony.

Ironic affirmatives ask that the critic become a participant in the debate round. They encourage a careful reading of both the evidence and the performance. The role of the ballot is an important question in debate rounds and with irony, critics are asked to do more than assign numbers and a win to blank boxes on a piece of printer paper. Irony demands that critics act not as empty receptacles at which arguments are thrown, but as active listeners to and participants in a political project. Voting issues, impact analysis, and flowing continue to remain important, but so too does an evaluation of political action. This is different than the evidence verses evidence work that a critic normally does because it encompasses a deeper level analysis of not just what the evidence says, but how what that evidence says is reconfigured into a political act that empowers debaters.

Clapping and singing in a debate round are likely to ruffle more than a few feathers for traditional critics. Ruffling feathers, however, is not a reason to vote an affirmative down. It is also probably true that one will not see many members of Congress engaged in full-fledged ironic speech act, but even the most policy-driven speeches and individuals are making use of irony. Irony and policy are not mutually exclusive. With ironic affirmatives, public policy options usually continue to be advocated. Listen to any filibuster on the House floor or political pundit on the radio or morning news show and you'll be inundated with wordplay in its many forms. Think of irony's performance as a new way to see a round, as a way to participate more thoroughly in the debate as opposed to passively passing judgment.

It cannot be overstated: Ironic affirmatives do require the critic to do more than evaluate evidence. The critic must evaluate the performance. Questions to consider are: How well has the ironist convinced me that irony matters? Do I understand what is and is not ironic about this affirmative? Has the ironic affirmative withstood challenges from the negative both on the evidentiary and performance level? Does the affirmative understand their ironic project? Is the affirmative consistent in their irony or does it look like a hollow attempt to trick the negative?

What are the benefits of irony to debate and debaters?

Irony can help make the sometimes frightening world of policy debate a little less imposing. I'm not suggesting that every novice team should run irony, because they theory and framework debates can get quite complex, but instead that irony provides another lens through which to debate. Irony may be a tool of inclusivity, something for which all debate community members should be advocating. Advocating ironically often requires less speed and ironic rounds can be less confrontational as debaters step away from aggressive win-at-all-costs advocacy to have more fun with their persuasive capabilities. That's not to say that ironic affirmatives do not win rounds; they do. The ironic debate makes it okay to laugh and often produces cross examinations that are more fun and less vitriolic.

Ironic affirmatives may provide a way for speech students to become a part of the activity. Those speech students with experience in Humorous Interpretation may find irony to be at least somewhat analogous to their performance in speech events. With many debate programs sharing resources with forensics programs, irony may provide a way for students to transition more seamlessly between activities.

Irony will also help students to better understand popular culture, politics, and much of their class work. Irony forces debaters to become more astute observers of rhetorical acts. It encourages active listening and suggests that surface level analysis is simply not enough. Delving deeper into written and spoken material can greatly enhance a student's ability to achieve in the classroom and later on in college. Pursuing irony means pursing critical thinking. Understanding irony will give students a new appreciation for their political power. What high school often fails to teach is that a student has power and that students can have authorship over their actions. Irony helps address those needs and encourages students to become active participants in their actions.

Conclusion

Irony presents a number of possibilities for great debate rounds. It affords both debaters and critics the opportunity to become more engaged with debate and with each other. Even where debate might be turning toward more classic interpretations, irony represents an opportunity to engage in a rhetorical practice with which we are all familiar and which is not as obscure or untraditional as some might think. Finally, irony is a political act that empowers students to engage their world. Through political power, debaters become more than talking heads, they become political citizens who can engage the politics of the possible.

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About the Author

Nick J. Sciullo is the Director of Debate at T.C. Williams High School in Alexandria, VA. He is also an Assistant Coach with the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. Sciullo is a former policy debater for Tallwood HS in Virginia Beach, VA where he won a Virginia High School League State Championship. He went on to debate at the University of Richmond. He graduated from West Virginia University College of Law and writes and speaks on popular culture, public policy, and race/class/gender issues.

In Memoriam

The NFL is deeply saddened by the recent loss of two of its members. Although their time with us was short, their memory will live on.

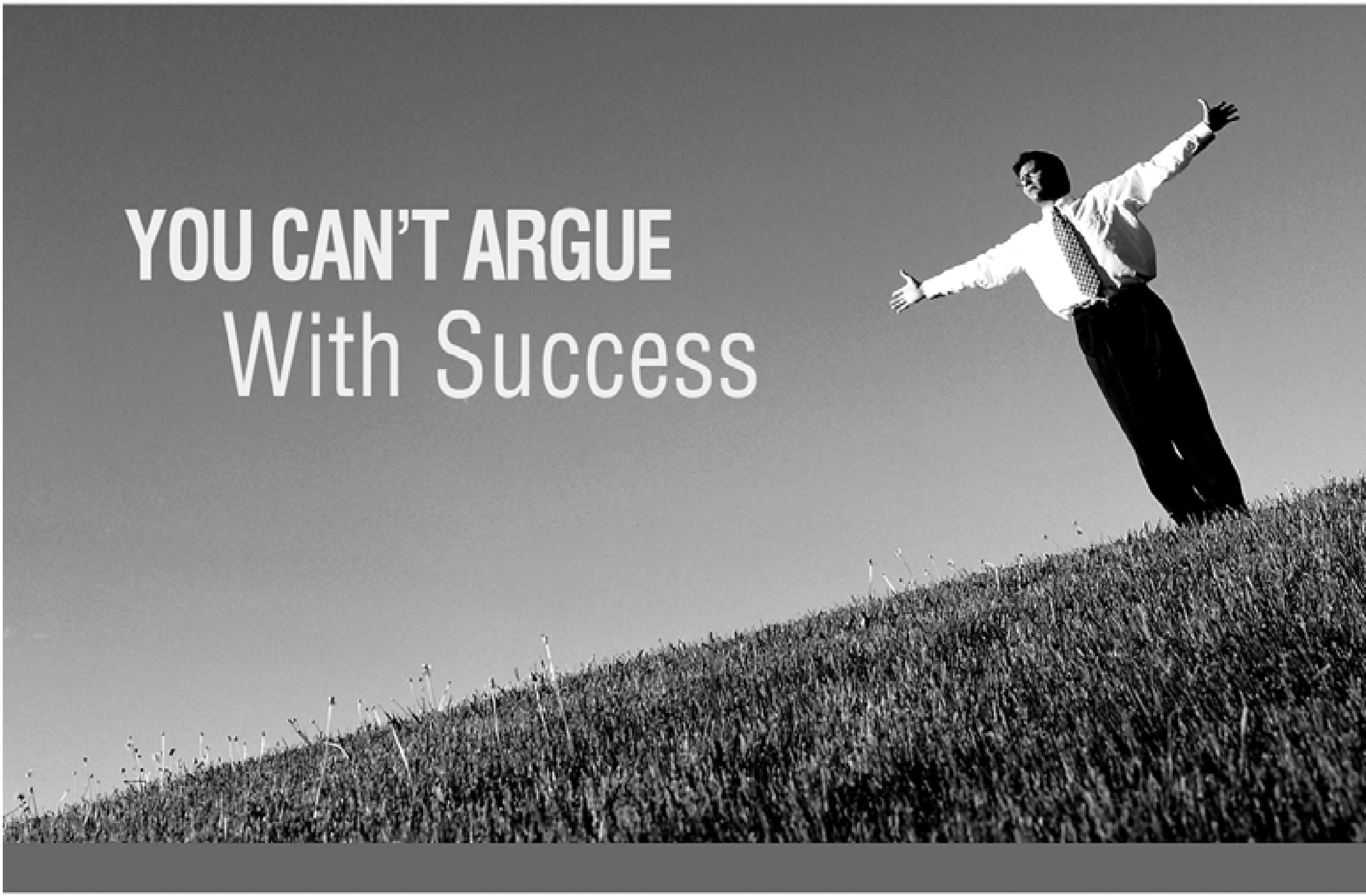
Kathleen Thayer Beach, a 2009 graduate of Rossview High School in Tennessee, lost her life in a car accident October 1, 2009. She was on her way to crew practice in Sewanee, TN, where she was attending the University of the South. Kathleen was the NFL Expository champion in 2007 and a four-time qualifier to the NFL National Tournament. Her mother, Lee Ellen Beach, is the debate coach at Rossview High School.

Aja Gerrity, a 2009 graduate of Ridgefield High School, in Ridgefield, WA, was involved in a fatal car accident on August 10, 2009. She had planned to attend a performing arts college in New York City in the fall. Last year Aja's journey from cheerleader to debater was chronicled in *Rostrum* and on the MTV show *MADE*. She was coached by Kenneth Bisbee.

Kathleen Thayer Beach

Aja Gerrity

"Next season doesn't begin in the fall. Next season begins at Western Kentucky University."



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The Ethics of Debate Coaching

by Tom Fones

"I'm a card-cuttin' machine." These were first words out of his mouth after I asked him to describe why he wanted to be an assistant coach at my school. I didn't know how to respond. He meant that as a good thing, I'm sure. How was I to politely say that I thought what he was bragging about was unethical? How was I to make it sound friendly when I said that I thought that coaches who prepare evidence for debaters, hand them speeches and/or debate vicariously through them were in the wrong? How was I going to say that coaches who hire assistants specifically to be "super-debaters" and act as ventriloquists for their students, are immature and wrong-headed? This was not going to be an easy discussion.

Teaching someone to debate has value, in an educational sense, only when the logic of the activity is taught from the ground up, not when debaters are simply told what to say and when to say it like trained parrots. I see a clear distinction between a debate teacher and a debate coach, in that a coach is concerned primarily with wins and losses, whereas a teacher is concerned with the educational benefit for the student. By the way, this distinction has nothing to do with whether the adult is actually in a classroom or not. In short, the point of debate should be to teach students skills that they will use for the rest of their life. Trophies are simply motivational tools to inspire them to put in the effort.

The challenges of teaching debate, as opposed to coaching it, are really two-fold: 1) it takes more time to teach a student from the ground up, and 2) teaching the right way, instead of taking shortcuts may not produce instant or regular competitive success.

Some coaches say that they want "to get kids started" by handing them speeches, blocks, etc. written by coaches and/or varsity debaters. The problem with this approach is that young students are ultimately left to pronounce they don't understand, and become leaves without trees, advocates for positions they are unfamiliar with and otherwise struggle to explain arguments they cannot even begin to fathom.

Winning is a double-edged sword. Obviously, success is motivating, and continuing lack of success can discourage students (and adults for that matter.) But winning debates can be seductive in a negative way. Pretty soon the educational function of debate can be obscured, the trophies can become the be-all and end-all, and victory becomes educationally self-destructive. Thus, all adults who lead debate programs need to seriously examine why they're in the activity in the first place. In particular, they need to ask themselves whether they are using the competitive nature of debate to facilitate learning, or to satisfy their own ego needs. Ultimately, the answer to that question informs the way debate programs are run. It is sad to see adults clutching debate trophies to their chest in search of validation. That level of short-sightedness is understandable in students, and even in recent graduates, but when someone who should know better still indulges in such narcissism, it sets a very bad example for students.

Of course, no debate teacher will be perfect all the time. It's hard in the rush before a tournament to keep from stepping over the line between helping one's students and doing their work for them. We need to give ourselves permission to make mistakes occasionally. There is a massive difference, however, between an occasional slip and an ongoing policy of cutting corners to gain a competitive advantage. We must strive to remember that we are educators first, and that awards are a means to an end, not an end unto themselves.

If you agree with the above, the question becomes what can you do about it? First of all, you can try to be a teacher, and not just a coach. Give the students the chance to make their own mistakes. Assume that you and your assistants, if you have them, are being watched by the parents, administrators, and school boards as you work with the students. Ask yourself if they would see what you're doing as legitimate teaching or debating vicariously. If you feel you need to hide your methods from the people who pay for your program, who supervise your school, or whose children you're working with, that should tell you all you need to know.

Second, you can speak out. Obviously, it isn't a persuasive approach to criticize individual teachers or coaches, but stressing the educational nature of debate in a positive way can be helpful. Tell other coaches how you do things and don't let your assistants violate your rules.

Finally, when you judge, you can regard speeches that are delivered in a way that indicates the student has no idea what they're saying can be treated appropriately. Students should be able to clearly explain their arguments when questioned: Otherwise, their credibility is drastically undermined. Having someone lose because they don't know what they read is totally appropriate, not to mention motivating.

Academic debate is a wonderful activity that can teach amazing skills to young people. It is our obligation to support the positive aspects of this experience. ■

About the Author

Tom Fones is a Double-Diamond teacher at Saint Paul Academy and Summit School. He previously worked with debaters at Macalester College and Mounds Park Academy.

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Student of the Year Spotlight

by Danielle Camous

As I sit in my dorm room relatively early on a Saturday morning, I can't help but wonder what people do with their Saturdays. My roommate is still asleep and my floor is relatively quiet. No one seems to be up. Honestly, I'm not too sure why I actually am.

I take that back. I know exactly why I am up this early on a Saturday morning. For four years my weekends from November to March or early April started at 4:30 or so in the morning. And while I am aware that to most people, this seems absolutely bizarre, I loved every minute of it.

Although thinking back four years ago, I know that I wasn't as sold on the idea of early mornings, long Saturdays in some random high school, or competing against kids that frankly seemed light-years better than I could ever be. So how do you make the most of your high school forensics years?

Rule 1: Realize everyone started in the same place you did.

It's easy to see successful competitors and think to yourself that you will never be able to reach that level, especially after a few weekends of what seems like nothing but losses. But you're wrong. All of those national finalists or Student of the Year finalists started as novices too, and each took their fair share of losses as well. My first tournament ever my debate partner and I had 1 win and 2 losses. Not too bad, right? Wrong! The win was a bye; we never actually won a round that day. For two competitive freshmen girls this was far from acceptable and left us somewhere between frustrated beyond belief and convinced that we would never be good at Policy Debate.

But we got better. We learned and grew as debaters and as we improved we would take fewer losses. It's natural to want to see immediate results, but like any Olympic athlete will tell you, those magnificent results don't come overnight. But here's the comforting news: the next round will be easier! Each time you compete you make yourself a better competitor!

Rule 2: Measure your own success, not everyone else's.

My coach always tells the novices at the start of every season that we measure success a little differently, especially at the first tournament of the year. (1) Go to every round. (2) Don't run yelling, screaming and/or crying out of any round. (3) Give it your best effort. If you accomplish these three things, then you have already achieved the first measure of success.

Too often we measure our success by comparing ourselves to one another. Not only can this be irrelevant, because each finds success in forensics (and forensics is really just a metaphor for life) in different ways, it is simply counterproductive. I may have had a successful career in Policy and US Extemp, but does that mean I am a better competitor than my little brother, who is already having a highly impressive career in Interp, or vice versa? No, not at all! If I obsess over the fact that my brother placed 10th at state in Humor and I never had a good state tournament then I subsequently overlook the fact that I had great nats quals tournaments all four years of high school (even if I didn't qualify all four years). Measure your success by how much you have improved between this tournament and the last. And when you feel like nothing is going right, and even through senior year I had those tournaments, you can measure your success in the simplest terms. Did you go to every round? Did you run yelling, screaming, and/or crying from the room? Did you give it your all? Besides, you do for a living what most Americans classify as their number one fear. So you're already extremely successful for conquering that fear.

Rule 3: Represent yourself well, ALWAYS

The most successful forensics competitors seem to always be the most competitive ones as well, and as well they should be. Forensics IS a sport. It requires countless hours of dedication, the mastering of a skill, determination to succeed, and growth from both wins and losses. And occasionally, like in any sport, a few Terrell Owens pop up in the group. While these TOs in forensics aren't pulling sharpies out of their socks to sign a football after scoring a touchdown, they perform stunts that cause eye rolls from a significant portion of the forensics population.

Truth be told, there is absolutely nothing wrong with winning or celebrating, but it's how you win and lose and celebrate that matters. We will all eventually lose, and if you don't then you will be the best forensics competitor who has ever lived, but when you do it is important to remember who you are and represent that person in the best light.

One of my most memorable moments from Nationals was waiting in anticipation for the Dramatic Interp awards because friend and fellow Colorado Grande competitor Jake Abell was a finalist; and who doesn't want their friend to be a National Champion? But when Jake was announced as 2nd place, the biggest and most genuine smile spread across his face. For most of us, this might be hard. After four dedicated years of work it is hard to come up just short of being a National Champion and a little disappointment for making it this far but not quite taking the title would be understandable. But Jake wasn't the least bit upset. He hugged Jane Bruce, graciously received his award, and walked to the side of the stage where he waited with the biggest smile on his face to watch Jane receive her award. I don't think that anyone cheered harder, louder, or longer than Jake did.

Forensics is more than just winning or losing. It's about developing a well-rounded individual who will go out and change the world. We won't always win the ultimate prize but we can choose, like Jake did, to genuinely celebrate others' successes. In this way we will always be representing ourselves well.

We are a community bound by unique passion for speaking and competition. Our alumni include famous actors like Brad Pitt, famous TV personalities like Oprah, and a long and proud list of politicians, political activists, and those who seek justice. At the very least, honor those who came before you and will come after you by living by the same standards of integrity, humility, respect, leadership, and service that they did.

Your forensics years will be the best years of your life so enjoy them! Because one Saturday morning in the future you will wake up and try to figure out what people actually do with their Saturdays. ■

About the Author

Danielle Camous is the 2009 NFL Student of the Year. An alumna of St. Mary's High School in Colorado Springs, CO, Danielle earned awards in debate, Congress, and US Extemp during her four-year career and achieved a degree of Premier Distinction. She is now a student at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

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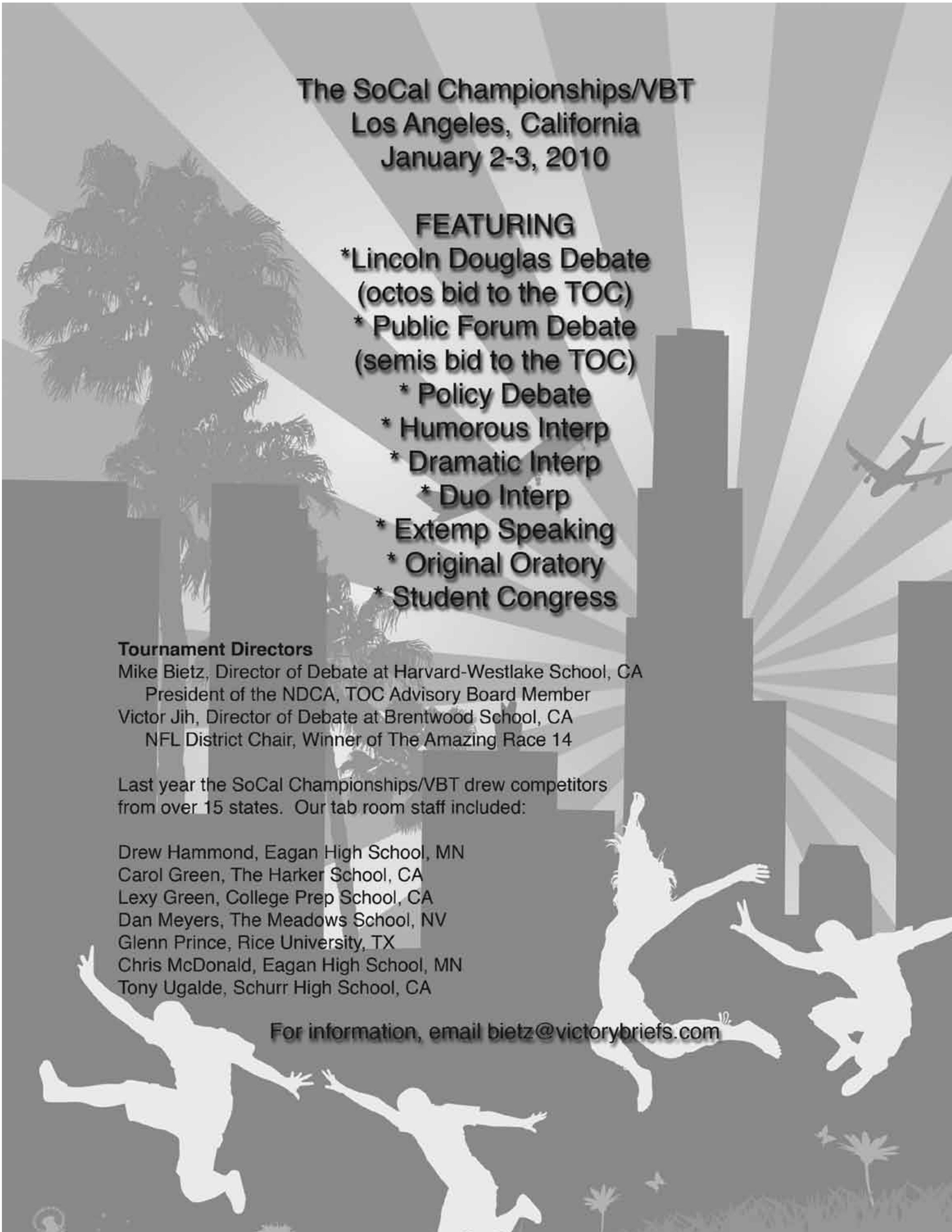
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Training the Talking Tools: Vocal Technique

by Adam Jacobi

While the craft of forensics is rooted in the use of voice to communicate orally, the modern emphasis on message and meaning often makes vocal technique an afterthought. This is not to say that speaking and debating should be mere sophistry. However, it should be practiced so effectively that it entices even the most disinterested party to want to listen.

Generative Topics

Emphasis in debate should be on logical organization of credible evidence. But, without some degree of emotion or even a smidgeon of interest, debaters become mindless automatons who are merely spitting out arguments. Tenets of Aristotelian rhetoric still hold true today.

An attorney who recently judged a group of collegiate speakers reminded them that an affected, formulaic vocal pattern may be what they're used to in forensics, but it certainly won't get them far in the real world outside of speech and debate. When students truly embrace this idea, they transcend the mere expectation of competition speaking or debating, and truly connect with their audiences.

Teachers who embrace a love for linguistics—especially syntax and diction—allow their students to control communication situations to the highest levels. In that spirit, consider the meaning of "affect" versus "emote." Think of an interpretive performance that just seems stagey. It's artificial. The manner of presentation is formulaic, and therefore, predictable. As noted voice teacher and author Cicely Berry reflects on hearing a presentation, "I have made a mental note, 'sound v. words'; and to me it simply means that I, the listener, am receiving the sound of the voice, perhaps full of 'meaningful' inflection, but am not being made to notice the words. I am therefore not interested by the argument, and so I am not fully engaged." (Berry, p. 17). Now, think of the performance that stirs you. And, for the students who really want to share a message that leaves a meaningful impression on their audiences beyond a desire to win, that's when communication transcends forensics. That's when forensics embraces its true root meaning: to discover a truth.

Tony Figliola of Holy Ghost Preparatory School in Philadelphia once said that the best dramatic literature has comedic elements and the best humorous literature has serious undertones. That is because the best communication is dynamic. All forms of debate—Policy, Lincoln Douglas, Public Forum and Congressional—must involve clash that demonstrates students are listening and responding to one another, not simply advocating their own position.

Understanding Goals

Proper vocal technique is universal to any speech or debate presentation. In her book *Theatre Games for Young Performers*, Maria C. Novelly identifies the core vocal elements: rate, projection, clarity, expression, pitch, stance, eye contact and poise.

As Novelly notes, a beginning speaker is prone to speaking rapidly. A heightened pace can be a strategic tool for building suspense and interest, but it can also be tiresome. In *Glencoe Speech*, the authors cite the "rate gap" between speaking and listening causes listeners to have "spare time," allowing their minds to wander (McCutcheon, et al., p. 56). This is why the use of pause, and slowing down to emphasize key moments or tag lines can be so important. Judges of forensic contests are human beings, and after judging several rounds, distraction and a certain degree of exhaustion can make listening a more challenging task. One constant rate prevents emphasis of important ideas.

The importance of projection cannot be overstated. Students are too often in their own little world, unaware of ventilation systems in the back of the room where a judge might sit, or what the overall acoustic quality of a space might be. Students should command a space, vocally, without overwhelming it. This takes practice and attentiveness to each space where a student speaks.

Clarity is paramount. Even if students speak more rapidly (perhaps because suspense is building, or they're using a fast rate to exaggerate the number of items in a list), crisp enunciation of consonant sounds, or drawing out of vowel sounds for emphasis can allow an audience to better connect to the message.

Expression and pitch are vital toward creating an emotional reaction in the audience. Whether expressing sympathy for a tragic protagonist in literature, or empathy for the impact of an argument, variation in pitch and tone should be tailored to the meaning of each word spoken, and not a formulaic pattern that each sentence follows. An example of boredom created by predictable

“Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you—tripping on the tongue.”

~ *William Shakespeare:* Hamlet*, Act III, Sc. 2*

speech pattern would be economist, lawyer and actor Ben Stein as the announcer in Clear Eyes commercials, based on his monotone teacher character in *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*.

Stance, or posture, is so important to being able to project clearly, and connect with an audience in other ways, such as eye contact. Even effective debaters look up and observe a judge's body language to gauge understanding and ensure they are adapting to the judge, accordingly. It's also physically strenuous in speaking for a debater to stack multiple tubs atop one another, and attempt to read papers on the top tub lid while tilting his/her head downward at a near 90 degrees. The debater's articulation channels are being constricted; this assuredly is not ergonomic! At least laptop screens allow a debater to speak upright, although they may obstruct a debater's eye contact with the judge.

Eye contact is a formidable tool for a speaker to ensure his/her message is being received effectively, to build trust in an audience, and to instill an emotional connection with the subject matter presented or performed. Beginning students often are unaware of the importance of sustained, meaningful eye contact with each member of the audience (not just the judge), and not giving eye contact to imaginary people if there are few people or just one audience member present.

Poise comes from a confident command of a speaking situation, which all of the aforementioned techniques feed toward. A poised speaker is fairly unflappable when it comes to unexpected circumstances, and is adaptable. If the sun is shining in a speaker's face, he/she might simply walk to the window, and adjust the blinds, while not breaking focus.

Performances of Understanding & Ongoing Assessment

A number of instructional sources with myriad vocal exercises are available to assist with training students. A few examples are included here, and further activities—many inspired by these—can be found online at **teachingspeech.org**. What we often think of as warm-ups before competition can be introduced as a foundation for better vocal technique underlying all presentation.

1. **Coloring Words** (Novelly, p. 66): a fun, interactive group activity, where a leader calls out a particular word in a neutral voice, and the members reflect on the connotation of the word, and express that associated meaning and emotion through their vocal pitch and may even physically express the words through gesture and facial expression. Examples of words include: “tense,” “silly,” “sweltering,” “chilly,” and “infuriated.”
2. **Speak the Speech** (Tanner, p. 146): explores the various articulation tools used in physically creating speech (from the lungs and diaphragm to the nasal cavity, and uses a variety of fun, engaging exercises to train students in audibility, quality, flexibility/variation/emphasis, pause, enunciation and pronunciation.
3. **Sounding & Resonance** (Cohen, p. 109): explores the process of how sound is supported through exhalation and vibration of various vocal folds and cavities. A common exercise along the same lines as Cohen's involves saying the consonant sounds of the alphabet (“y” is included) in succession, for example, “bah (pause), bah (pause), bah (pause), bah (pause), bah-bah-bah-bah-bah-bah-bah (pause), bah-bah-bah (pause), bah-bah-bah (pause), bah-bah-bah (slight pause), bah (slight pause), bah (pause), ba-ba-ba-ba-ba-ba-ba-ba-ba-ba-ba-ba-ba.” Cohen gives examples of feeling the bridge of one's nose while saying “pah pin, pah pin, pah pin” to set a sense of what sounds create the most vibration. In the same vein, a great example of breath support via diaphragm versus throat is to say a throaty “ha!” versus a guttural “huh!”
4. **Tongue Twisters**: we know these well in speech and debate; following are some examples to exercise the articulators.
   a) I love New York, unique New York; you know you need unique New York (repeat in succession, faster)
   b) Cinnamon aluminum linoleum (repeat in succession, faster)
   c) Toy boat, toy boat, toy boat, toy boat
   d) I slit a sheet, a sheet I slit; and on that slitted sheet I sit (repeat in succession, faster)
   e) Backing into bud, the black bug bled black blood.
5. **Low-Volume Radio Broadcast** (Novelly, p. 80): involves simply using voice and not body to express information. An affected “broadcast personality” voice may be employed, since radio announcing lacks the interaction between speaker and audience in the same shared physical space. This is a great way for students to understand how different situations call for different approaches to vocal technique. For more information on structure, see this month's **Event Exploration.**

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About the Author

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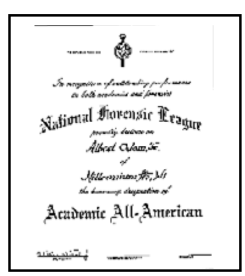

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Debate 2.0—Web Services and Tools to Enhance Your Coaching

by Richard Glover

Debate is my hobby, and has been for nearly 15 years now. I make my living in the technology industry. My career has afforded me a chance to engage with technology in some really exciting ways. Many of the technologies I interact with have made their way into my debate coaching. Joshua Gonzales from Wake Forest covered some great tools and technologies in this column this past May. I'd like to build on his work and discuss a number of tools that I find useful for coaching debate.

One of the primary tools I use with my team is the Google Apps package. Google provides a complete suite of applications that you can use to host a Web site, control your practice and tournament calendar, share and collaborate on documents and cases, chat, and even provide an e-mail address for team members and coaches. For the negligible price of around $10/year, you can register a domain name for your team. Google will, upon providing proof that you're a non-profit or educational organization, give you free access to their premium class of services. There are unbelievable organizational benefits to these applications. The ability to work collaboratively on documents, track changes, and share research alone is enough to make this option well worth looking into. Google's tools are powerful, functional, and easy to use.

One of the Google Tools that Joshua mentioned is Google Reader. Syndicated feeds are one of the biggest boons to research I've ever encountered. Almost all regularly updated content on the Web these days has an associated RSS feed. Google Reader aggregates those feeds so that you can examine all of the content you're interested in in one simple place. Even better, Google Reader has recently introduced a feature where you can create bundles of RSS feeds to share with others. Say, for example, you wanted to create a package of feeds that you've collected on the subject of poverty to share with your Policy debaters. Google Reader makes it very easy to do just that. If you're already a Google Reader user, you can find this bundle functionality under the "Browse for Stuff" category in the sidebar. Simply click the button entitled "Create a Bundle," add a title, a short description, and then drag the feeds you wish to share from your sidebar into the bundle area. Once you've saved the bundle, you're given a number of different ways to share it, from e-mailing a link, to sending an OPML file to people who use feed readers other than Google Reader.

There are a host of other awesome tools available for free on the net that make research a real joy. One of my personal favorites is Evernote *(http://www.evernote.com)*. Evernote is working to create a ubiquitous capture utility. They've done some remarkable work to this end. They have an excellent Web application, as well as a fully featured desktop application that syncs with the Web app. The best part of the service that Evernote offers is its ability to take a number of types of input, categorize it, and provide searchable access to it. Evernote will even index words that it recognizes in photographs. This means, effectively, that you can use the camera on your cellphone to take a picture of the whiteboard upon which you've just written a case outline, send it to your Evernote account, and Evernote will create a searchable index of the text it recognizes in the image, allowing you to search for it and use it later. Clearly this particular technology has myriad benefits for research and writing.

For sharing files that are too large to be e-mailed, there's Dropbox *(http://www.getdropbox.com)*— two Gigabytes of space that syncs between computers, with the Web, and can be shared with other users. The beauty of this program is that it looks and functions like a normal folder on your computer. It takes the contents of the folder and syncs them between computers that use the software, or between folders that you share with other dropbox users. Changes to the files are tracked in the DropBox Web application, allowing you to examine revisions to files, revert back to old copies, and guarantee that things are backed up and remain useful and accessible anywhere you have access to the internet. Imagine the possibilities! Never again will you have to worry about a debater who has forgotten their cases, because they've saved them to the team's shared Dropbox folder. All this, again, for the low, low price of *free.*

As these technologies become more prominent, it is incumbent upon us as eductors to seize upon them.

All of the notetaking and research sharing tools in the world are nothing if you don't have the research to back them up. To that end, there is one tool that stands out above all others: Mozilla Firefox. The open-source Firefox Web browser is fast, functional, and highly extendable. Firefox has an extensive add-on architecture that has spawned thousands of plugins and additions that create some extraordinary functionality. The ad-block extension alone is worth switching to Firefox. I have compiled a collection of add-ons for Firefox that extend its functionality in ways useful for doing debate research. These add-ons include highlighting tools, deep search tools, annotation tools, communication tools, social media tools (particularly Delicious and StumbleUpon —great for finding and sharing relevant information), and the most-excellent Debate Copy add-on by Alex Gulakov. Debate copy has some great features, particularly its ability to make debate-formatted cites from Google News search results. The add-on collection is called "Debate Research Tools" and can be found at *http://addons.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox/collection/debate*. Please, subscribe to it and use it as you see fit.

In addition to being a great all-around Web browser, Windows users can download a portable version of Firefox to be installed on a standard USB thumb drive. Think of the possibility of being able to carry your browser, your bookmarks, and all of your trusted research add-ons with you wherever you go. All you need to do is plug in your USB key and launch the application. PortableApps provides a portable version of the most recent build of Firefox. It is compatible with all of the extensions in my Debate collection *(http://portableapps.com/apps/internet/firefox_portable)*.

Beyond search and annotation tools, there's more to the Web than just Google. Twine *(http://www.twine.comwww.twine.com)* is an interesting service that creates ebs of interconnected ideas and spaces for collaborative research. Digg *(http://www.digg.comwww.digg.com)* and Reddit *(http://www.reddit.com)* are social news sites that provide an insight into what is popular and interesting on the Web in a vast number of different categories. Twitter *(http://www.twitter.com)*, especially when used with a tool like Tweetdeck *(http://tweetdeck.com)* can be used to find relevant information on a vast number of subjects being discussed. Setting up a Twitter account for your team, incidentally, gives you a really handy way to send announcements out to your team members. And, of course, Joshua thoroughly covered the rich ground that is a team wiki. There is some excellent free wiki software available that can be set up with your team domain name to create an excellent resource for your team to collaborate and share ideas. The great thing about the wiki model is its ability to cross-reference and connect ideas. You can allow or restrict access to the editing functionality to whomever you wish.

There are so many excellent tools and utilities available that could revolutionize the way we coach debate. There are even more around the corner. This month, Google will be granting limited access to their new Google Wave application, which promises to transform the way we communicate on the internet forever. I think it may be one of the biggest technology game-changers on the block, and has the potential to revolutionize our community and the way we interact. As these technologies become more prominent, it is incumbent upon us as educators to seize upon them, find new uses to which they can be put, and give our students access to tools that will serve them beyond debate rounds.

If you have questions about any of these technologies, if you'd like to know more, or if you're interested in providing feedback or suggestions for the add-on collection I can be reached at ***rglover@mcclintockspeech.com***. I hope that everybody can find something useful here that will serve their students and make their team more functional and productive. ■

About the Author

Richard Glover coaches debate at McClintock High School in Tempe, Arizona. He makes his living as a technology consultant and Web geek.

Vocal Technique Applied: Radio News Announcing

by Adam Jacobi

While NFL offered it as a main event from 1939 to 1974, Radio Speaking/Announcing has since been relegated to the purview of local invitationals and state leagues. Like Discussion and Congress, it remains one of the more practicable events for simulating a career in public speaking: broadcasting. Last year, Wellington High School (FL) coach Paul Gaba contacted the National Office, looking for ideas for different events he could introduce at an invitational for the Palm Beach area. My answer to him was Radio News Announcing. A variation of this is quite popular at the middle level: Television Announcing.

The premise is simple. A student (or in some areas/states, a pair or even group of students) prepares a newscast for a prescribed period of time. For the sake of example, I will use Wisconsin rules. In Wisconsin, students arrive at a contest and are all given a uniform packet of news, usually from a local radio station who shares some wire news or prepared scripts, but sometimes, from actually newspaper stories. The student then takes her/his place in the prep room (alongside extempers) and has 30 minutes to synthesize a five-minute newscast, which includes a balance of international news, national news, state/local news, sports, weather, and a commercial (which a student must sometimes cleverly create from a print display advertisement). All of the content must come from the packet the student is given each round, except for the student's broadcast persona, call letters, and jingle (should they choose to include one).

The student is seated *profile* to the judge, who may not take any physical aspect of the student's presentation into account, except whether the student rustles her/his papers, since that could conceivably carry over the airwaves. The student must finish "on the nose," or as close as possible to five minutes, or s/he is discounted in score and ranking for ineffective time management, given the constraints of air time in actual broadcasting.

Like Discussion and Congress, Radio remains one of the more practicable events for simulating a career in public speaking: broadcasting.

At the tournament I have hosted for several years, the final round is distinguished by each student receiving a complete copy of the local newspaper, with the expectation that s/he builds a newscast from that paper. Meets will often give students more news than they could use, so it's up to the student to determine how much is worthy to include. The judge is furnished with the same, uniform copy of the packet all the students receive.

Students in Radio News Announcing often bring their own scissors, tape, and blank paper to a meet, so they can splice and mount their stories, much as students in interpretation events may do. It's also a limited prep event that deals with current events, so it's a fun entry-level companion to Extemporaneous Speaking.

Official Rules

1. A contest will assemble material of 15-20 minutes in length for each round of competition. Identical material will be provided for each participant at five-minute intervals, one-half hour before each participant is expected to present.
2. The speaker may delete or edit any parts of items from the provided material. However, no new articles or items may be added except transition sentences, introductions, and conclusions.
3. The newscast will include one or more commercials advertising some product or service. Commercials will be supplied with script material, which the student may use as written or may be edited/embellished to further enhance the product or service. Only tournament supplied commercial(s) may be used. The commercial(s) may be inserted at any point but must be included within the time limits.
4. The time limit is five minutes and the speaker is expected to finish "on the nose;" however, if a speaker concludes the presentation within ten seconds on either side of five minutes the speaker will not be penalized. Beyond those limits a point will be subtracted for each ten seconds away from 4 minutes 50 seconds or 5 minutes 10 seconds as noted under criterion five.
5. Any use of audio/visual aids is not permitted. The speaker is to be seated in profile position to the adjudicator.

The most successful students in Radio are those who project an enthusiasm and interest for the news, while maintaining a professional demeanor.

ON AIR

6. The speaker must supply his/her own stopwatch and equipment for cutting, editing, and reading the newscast.

Criteria for Evaluation

1. The extent to which the student provided clear and logical organization of the newscript, balancing the levels and types of news including international, national and state news, weather, and sports.
2. The extent to which the presentation reflected effective language skills, including use of smooth transitions with clear, vivid, and appropriate word choices.
3. The extent to which the delivery was in a clear, pleasant, and confident voice, reflecting good articulation, pronunciation, volume, pitch, and voice quality. Physical presence of the participant is not to be a consideration.
4. The extent to which the commercial(s) was incorporated as an important item in the newscast without dominating the news.
5. The extent to which the student delivered the newscast within the time limits without unnatural speeding up or slowing down.

Adapted from rules of the Wisconsin High School Forensic Association, www.whsfa.org.

Strategy and Coaching

The most successful students in Radio are those who project an enthusiasm and interest for the news, while maintaining a professional demeanor. Coaches often have students listen to some of the most accomplished broadcast personalities, such as can be heard on National Public Radio.

Radio is the one event where an affected voice, and perhaps even different vocal personas/characters for say, the sports, weather, and commercial portions can create an interesting dynamic. Occasional commentary that emphasizes the interest of stories is encouraged, without adding "hokey" humor. Many forensic radio students also give P.A. announcements at their schools, which is also great practice.

To practice using a newspaper and obtaining old scripts is usually fairly easy. I've even had students practice their newscast for me, over the phone. You can find a sample script at **teachingspeech.org**.

As a high school speech participant, I dabbled in Radio News Announcing, and it sure came in handy when I was given the option of college practicum credit for having a radio show, as long as I included a substantive news component. Radio News Announcing is an accessible, enjoyable, and non-threatening event that has a skill set applicable across the forensic spectrum.

So, in the words of the immortal Paul Harvey, "…and that's the 'rest of the story!' Good day!" ■

About the Author

Adam Jacobi is the NFL's Coordinator of Programs and Coach Education. A former two-diamond coach of three NFL champions and an NCFL champion, he has taught courses in speech communication and International Baccalaureate theatre.

The Billman Book Club

Encouraging Life Learning in Leadership

November's Book of the Month:

Outlearning the Wolves: Surviving and Thriving in a Learning Organization

Hutchens, D. (2000). Waltham, MA: Pegasus Communications.

"You might laugh because every time I sign my name, I put a gold star after it," says Rachel Berry in the pilot episode of *Glee*. "But it's a metaphor, and metaphors are important." As this young ingénue suggests, metaphors can convey meaning powerfully when traditional expression fails. David Hutchens, the author of *Outlearning the Wolves: Surviving and Thriving in a Learning Organization*, would agree. Hutchens uses an affable fable as a vehicle to forward business theory. He explains such an approach by saying: "What kind of a business book that wanted to communicate serious business theory would do so using cute, talking animals?! Far too few! After all, having fun can be an important part of learning. And a metaphor, like the one in this book, is a powerful medium through which you can encounter new truths and new possibilities for the world you inhabit" (p. 53).

Hutchens' "learning fable" engages adults through storytelling and creative play, encouraging them to re-examine longstanding beliefs. Such an approach is far from conventional; however, when the text itself encourages readers to question the norm, perhaps an unusual approach is best. Accordingly, *Outlearning the Wolves* explores a community of talking sheep as they try to outwit the cunning carnivores ravaging their community. Their story provides valuable insight concerning the relationship between growth and survival.

In setting the stage for his fable, Hutchens explains that "Wolves have always eaten sheep. They always will eat sheep. If you are a sheep, you accept this as a fact of life." Faced with this reality, a community of sheep begin to believe that "the occasional loss, though sad, was to be expected" (p. 12). Resigning themselves to victimhood, the sheep live in fear. Then a sheep named Otto challenges the flock by saying, "I dream of a day when not another sheep will ever die to become breakfast for a wolf" (p. 16). While his compatriots balk at the idea, Otto insists: "We must make learning an ongoing part of life in the flock. We will become a learning flock" (p. 19).

While the flock is excited by Otto's vision, change comes slowly—too slowly, in fact, for Otto, who is carried off by a wolf the very next night. However, other sheep remain motivated by Otto's example. They begin to question the superiority of wolves, noting that wolves' activity is influenced by factors such as weather. The sheep resolve to

Hutchens' "learning fable" engages adults through storytelling and creative play, encouraging them to re-examine longstanding beliefs.

by Jenny Corum Billman

test their perceptions by studying their furry foes. Finally, they take stock of their own skills to devise a solution. In the end, thanks to the ingenuity of the learning-focused sheep, "the wolves stopped coming…the sheep stopped disappearing…and the fear was gone" (p. 47-48).

Hutchens includes a discussion guide at the conclusion of the learning fable which provides commentary and suggestions for further exploration. Here, he explains that "learning is innate. You—and your organization—are learning all the time, whether you intend to or not. The big question is, What can we do to trigger this innate learning ability in ways that help us achieve things that matter to us most?" (p. 54). Drawing on the work of noted author Peter Senge, the author provides the following suggestions for harnessing the power of learning:

Systems Thinking. "Events in our lives are rarely as simple and direct as they appear," notes Hutchens. Understanding these myriad complex factors can illuminate new strategies or solutions to old problems. For example, when the fabled sheep move beyond the apparent cause-and-effect of "wolf gets hungry/wolf eats sheep," they realize that other factors, including weather and geography, contribute to their problem. Manipulating these factors leads them to a solution within their control. Similarly, our problems, even ones that appear clear, operate in a complex system. Systems thinking, therefore, is required to address them.

Personal Mastery. Working within, perhaps in spite of, limitations to achieve desired results evidences personal mastery. Key to this discipline is having a clear vision and committing to its attainment. The author notes that such a skill enables leaders to "draw upon a deep, seemingly inexhaustible inner energy to create powerful results" (p. 59). Refusing the mindset of a victim and keeping one's focusing on the ultimate goal fuels transformational leadership.

Mental Models. This is a familiar concept for many, although it is often called by different names ("paradigm" and "weltanschauung" come to mind). Mental models create systemic meaning based on our perceptions of the world. To an extent, mental models are helpful in organizing an overwhelming world. Further, mental models are unavoidable—it seems the human brain is designed to synthesize data. However, these frameworks can be problematic if they prevent our analysis of situations in new, potentially more accurate ways. A devoted culture of learning, says Hutchens, will build skill in examining its mental models and testing others' to determine which are most helpful. Just as the sheep had to reevaluate their view of wolves (and themselves), members of a learning community should continuously reevaluate their mental models and test other ways of thinking.

Shared Vision. The author explains that a clear and compelling vision motivates people to change because they want to, not because they have to. However, vision cannot succeed unless people understand and choose to adopt it. Toward this end, Hutchens recommends that a vision tap into people's deepest aspirations (p. 60). For example, the sheep wanted to live free from fear. "That's a pretty compelling vision," Hutchens notes. "You can see how it would generate very different results than a jargony 'vision statement' to 'increase quality, excellence, etc.'" (p. 60). As Otto the sheep demonstrates, understanding and articulating a vision is key to affecting sustainable and transformational change.

Team Learning. Hutchens reminds readers that in a culture of learning, a committed team can generate more effective solutions than a group of individuals. Through free flowing collaboration and a shared goal, teams build on each others' skills and knowledge to affect change. The key to promoting this phenomenon, suggests the author, is "a deep, transformational dialogue in which team members can align in new, shared awareness about themselves and the world." In other words, communication is what enables team learning. Surely this is one skill area in which our community retains an edge.

To some, *Outlearning the Wolves* may seem like a fluffy children's book. However, those who are willing to abandon their perceptions of what an appropriate presentation should entail, if only for a little while, may come away with a powerful argument to continue learning, evaluating, and considering in a simple—yet radical—way. So this month, consider *Outlearning the Wolves*. After all, evidence is mounting that learning must be continuous…but it can also be fun.

Questions for the Community:

1. What matters most to your team? What matters most to the NFL?
2. What "wolves" stand in the way of these goals?
3. What do you know to be true about the challenges you face? Are you certain that these "truths" are accurate? What if they are not?
4. What skills do you possess to face these challenges? What previous experiences could be helpful?
5. What has been done to engage members of your team? Of the League? What could be done differently?
6. How can new approaches to the "wolves" be tested?
7. How can positive change be made permanent? ■

Feel free to e-mail your answers, comments, or other questions to Jenny.Billman@nationalforensicleague.org

About the Author

Jenny Corum Billman is the Coordinator of Public Relations for the National Forensic League. She holds an MA and a BA in Communication, both from Western Kentucky University, where she was a 4-year member of the forensic team and a Scholar of the College.

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