Service-Learning and Forensics

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A movement throughout American higher education is toward service-learning, a "form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development" (Jacoby, 1996, p. 5). Currently, this trend exists on the margins of academe but holds much promise for student and community development (Ehrlich, 1996). The call for service-learning has been in response to two concerns regarding higher education: that colleges should "assume a leadership role in addressing society's increasing problems and growing needs," and that colleges become more accountable for the vast social resources devoted to their goal of educating students (Jacoby, 1996, p. 3). This movement toward service-learning represents an opportunity for speech and debate programs to deliver innovative educational experiences and serve community needs within the educational mission of a college or university. To pursue this opportunity, we offer a definition of service-learning, consider four reasons why directors of forensics have hesitated to initiate service-learning projects, offer a rationale for service-learning to convince directors to consider such projects, and propose a pedagogical model for developing service-learning projects in forensics. We establish the connections between service-learning and forensic programs in the hope that forensic directors can utilize service-learning activities as a way to advance the education of students, meet department and university goals in innovative ways, and advance the image of the forensics program, department, and university within the community.

SERVICE-LEARNING DEFINED

Howard (1997) defines service-learning as a pedagogical model that intentionally integrates academic learning and relevant community service. The National and Community Service Act of 1990 describes this pedagogy as a method involving four components: (1) Students learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized experiences with either a profit or nonprofit agency or organization that meet actual community needs and that are coordinated in collaboration with that school and community; (2) projects are integrated into the student's academic curriculum or provides structured time for a student to think, talk, and write about what the student did and saw during the actual service activity; (3) projects provide students with opportunities to use newly acquired skills and knowledge in real-life situations in their own communities; (4) projects enhance what is taught in school by extending learning beyond the classroom into the community to develop a sense of caring for others.

Service-learning and forensics are not incompatible. When the Second National Conference on Forensics developed recommendations regarding the future of forensics (Parson, 1984), service-learning had not yet reached the forefront of discussions regarding the mission of higher education. However, at least one resolution, from the section devoted to identifying ways to strengthen educational goals and programs, suggested a relationship between forensic activities and community involvement. Resolution number sixteen stated that "Forensic educators should initiate and encourage participation in ongoing forums of forensic activities that are available to campus and community audiences" (p. 41). Additionally, in the section devoted to promotion and tenure standards, public service was considered to be a relevant criterion for evaluating a forensic director (p. 30). Since that time, the need to connect higher education with community concerns has become more pressing (Jacoby, 1996). Thus, it seems appropriate to assess the role and function of forensic programs to serve community needs

as well as the larger community of which colleges and universities are a part.

CHALLENGES TO IMPLEMENTING SERVICE-LEARNING IN FORENSICS

The forensic community has yet to explore fully the opportunities afforded by service-learning activities. Although explanations for the community's limited service-learning activities vary, we offer four reasons why forensic educators have been slow to answer the call for service-learning.

First, we find little discussion of service-learning in relation to the educational mission of forensic programs. Graduate programs designed to train individuals to direct speech programs have focused largely on preparation to train individuals to direct competitive speech programs; therefore, students face limitations in the curriculum offered in graduate programs that specialize in the training of forensic directors (Hanson, 1991; Hunt, 1991). Although highly trained directors and student speakers could easily adapt to noncompetitive audiences and contexts, there has been little discussion of reasons why directors and students should consider service-learning activities to fall within the educational mission of a program.

Second, the concept of service-learning seems closely related to volunteerism, internships, and experiential learning. Given these perceptions, directors might believe that service-learning is something that takes place in an internship, independent study, or in relation to the campus volunteer office. If distinctions between these types of educational experiences are unclear, they might doubt the relevance of service-learning projects to forensic programs and perceive service-learning to be the concern of other offices and course formats. Service-learning might rank as a low priority if it is perceived to be occurring elsewhere on campus.

Third, directors might perceive little available time for such projects. Preparation for competition, tournament travel, program

management, and recruitment efforts might already consume much of a director's resources for coaching and administration. Adding an additional project without a clear rationale for what it returns to the students, the director, the program, the university, and the community would probably dissuade a director from considering service-learning.

Fourth, students might perceive little time available for such projects. Many students manage part time employment, a full load of course work, and forensic activities along with some kind of social life. Adding a service-learning project to the list of priorities would exert additional pressure on students. Additionally, given the limited discussion of service-learning activities in relation to forensics, students might miss the connection between community service and the traditional goal of forensic activities that has been competitive success.

Despite these concerns, service-learning can be integrated with educational objectives for competitive speech programs. Directors can obtain information on how to design and implement service-learning components in their programs. Time for service-learning activities can be built into program activities or substituted for the time involved in attending a tournament. However, these actions will occur only if directors and students are convinced of the benefits. Therefore, we offer the following rationale for service-learning in forensics.

A RATIONALE FOR SERVICE-LEARNING IN FORENSICS

The rationale for service-learning in forensics can be outlined in terms of three claims. First, higher education has historically contributed to the education of individuals for citizenship in a democratic community. Since the forensic community draws on the resources of higher education to teach students how to talk about pressing social issues, forensic educators should have something to say about how forensics might address social problems. Second, positive effects of service-learning has been revealed in research

across disciplines. Given the research regarding the benefits of service-learning, forensic educators should consider service-learning as a viable method to promote educational growth on the part of students. Third, service-learning holds numerous benefits for the forensic community. These benefits are described in terms of educational outcomes for students, enhancing a program's status within a university community, and personal and professional rewards for forensic directors.

HIGHER EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Historically, higher education has been linked to developing citizens for a democratic community (Butts, 1980). The earliest goals for higher education were identified by American faculty and administrators as the "preparation of citizens for active involvement in community life" (Smith, 1994, p. 55). Shifting from a pre-revolutionary war focus on individual students to the post revolutionary war process of creating a nation, for the last century and a half, American higher education has sought to prepare citizens for a national, democratic community. Since this time, the call to community service has been answered with a variety of initiatives in response to changing needs. Even in recent decades, presidents have sought to provide leadership with their visions of community service-from John F. Kennedy's Peace Corps program initiated in 1961, to Lyndon Johnson's Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) in 1965, and most recently through Bill Clinton's Americorps National Service program. In the last decade, the idea of connecting community service to the educational mission of colleges and universities has been revisited (Jacoby, 1996).

POSITIVE EFFECTS OF SERVICE-LEARNING IDENTIFIED IN RESEARCH

Research suggests that well designed service-learning projects result in many positive effects for students. Markus,

Howard, and King (1993) found that service-learning helped students apply concepts to the real world, increased the likelihood of attending class, and helped them to achieve higher grades. In a sample of 48 faculty from sixteen different disciplines across the nation, Hesser (1995) found that 74% of the faculty interviewed felt that community service-learning projects had very extensively or extensively improved students' critical thinking/analytical skills; over 50% felt that the community service-learning project had extensively or very extensively improved problem solving skills and understanding how communities worked; and 76% felt that service-learning extensively or very extensively contributed to conceptual and course content learning outcomes. Myers-Lipton (1996) found that students who engaged in service-learning showed larger reductions in modern racism than students who participated only in volunteer activities or no service at all. Reporting preliminary results from a major longitudinal study of the effects of service on college students, Astin (1996) found that "participating in volunteer service during the undergraduate year has positive effects on such postcollege outcomes as enrolling in graduate school, being committed to racial understanding, and socializing across racial ethnic lines. It even increases the likelihood that the student will donate money to the college" (p. 131). Scales and Blyth (1997) found that participation in service-learning improves various dimensions of personal development; improves various dimensions of citizenship and personal development; improves various dimensions of intellectual development/academic success; and leads students to feel they had greater autonomy and responsibility for their learning than usual. Eyler, Giles, and Braxton (1997) found similar results. Drawing from the service-learning experiences of 1500 students at 20 colleges and universities, they reported that service-learning programs "appear to have an impact on students' attitudes, values, skills and the way they think about social issues even over the relatively brief period of a semester" (p. 13). Eyler, et al conclude that offering courses that integrate service-learning into the curriculum enhances the educational value of the programs,

may facilitate positive faculty-student relationships, and develop students' commitment to participate effectively as citizens. Finally, Stacey and Langer (1996) identified positive outcomes for students involved in academic service-learning projects in four categories that included personal growth, career development, social development, and academic success/cognitive development (See Figure 1.). An exhaustive review of the research on the effect of service-learning on students is beyond the scope of this paper. However, the evidence of positive effects from service-learning should compel directors to look more closely at the possibility of initiating service-learning in forensics.

BENEFITS AVAILABLE TO FORENSIC STUDENTS

Service-learning activities can challenge students to develop new understanding of self, community, and the value of their disciplinary knowledge since such activities call on students to apply their knowledge of speech communication in real world contexts. First, service-learning activities push students out of their comfort zones. While tournaments are qualitatively different from traditional classroom settings, they still possess a homogeneity that makes them familiar experiences to the veteran competitor. Service-learning activities, especially if they are directed at under-resourced populations or marginalized elements of the community, constitute a rich source of diversity for college students (Rhoads, 1997). These experiences develop students' skills by requiring them to confront and overcome anxiety in applying their knowledge in unfamiliar contexts. In a service-learning project on leadership development, Althaus (1997) identified some questions students asked in reflecting on their experience: "Typical questions they ask are: 'Will I look foolish?' 'How do I learn to talk to strangers?' 'Do I have anything to offer these people?' 'Why am I here?' 'Am I up to the challenge?' 'Can I do this?' 'Will I respect and say the right things to people [at my site]?'" (p. 126). Service-learning calls upon students to apply communication skills

in unfamiliar contexts, to test their ability to adapt to diverse audiences, and communicate appropriately in new situations. Service-learning requires students to extend and refine the kinds of communication skills that others have argued forensics develops: interpersonal skills (Friedley, 1991), small group communication skills (Zeuschner, 1991), organizational communication skills (Swanson, 1991), and possibly, media or public relations skills (Dreibelbis & Gullifor, 1991). Service-learning takes students out of the forensics laboratory and places them in the community, thus forcing them to assess their skills as communicators in real world, nonacademic environments.

Second, service-learning holds out the possibility of developing values of personal and social responsibility in our students. To determine if this is a unique value of service-learning in forensics, it is important to ask how well tournaments address this objective. Only a director knows if a forensic student's participation in competitive activities has reached a point of diminishing educational return on the investment of their time. While competition serves as a necessary mechanism to motivate students to learn how to prepare a performance and how to perform under pressure, at some point, the skills requisite for competitive success are probably obtained and the motivation for participation can become absorbed solely in the desire for competitive success. Focusing on competitive excellence is not inherently problematic for any given student. However, for the director, it is worth considering what aspects of forensic activity might offer a greater return on that student's investment of time. Derryberry (1991) has argued that directors should continually examine the rationale underlying forensic participation. Forensics programs seem uniquely suited to address issues of social responsibility. Debate topics focus on social problems. Individual events, such as extemporaneous speaking, persuasive speaking, and rhetorical criticism, address current events and controversies. One could even argue that many interpretive performances are aimed at increasing awareness of social issues. However, few courses in a university setting are directed

toward teaching social responsibility. It is only through actual practice that students can perceive and develop a concept of personal social responsibility. Often, it is only through a service-learning project that a student comes into close contact with someone who is poor, homeless, of a vastly different social world than the one he grew up in. The possibilities for enhanced understanding of communication concepts and practices through reflection on service activities cannot be overstated. Forensics is the closest activity to actual practice in the communication discipline. Our students are trained intensively in communication skills. Therefore, moving forensics out of the laboratory and into the field promises to activate values of citizenship more than traditional classroom and laboratory settings.

BENEFITS FOR A PROGRAM

Service-learning activities are consistent with the objectives of a liberal arts education. Within departments of speech communication, the importance of reaching out to audiences with a message is a central emphasis of many courses. Public speaking classes, argumentation classes, small group decision-making classes, courses in communication and leadership, as well as organizational communication courses examine how messages affect audiences. Forensic activities are no different from speech activities in the classroom. In an important reevaluation of the "forensics as laboratory" metaphor, Aden (1991) has argued that forensic activities are better understood as a "liberal art employing a rhetorical perspective" (p. 106). Citing Bryant, Aden (1991) noted how a liberal arts education, following Isocrates, should serve noble ends. Since forensic students have well-developed communication skills and sophisticated experience in constructing messages, it seems reasonable to expect that they should be provided with an opportunity to connect their educational training with learning experiences outside the university. Service-learning can accomplish noble ends through addressing community needs.

Forensic directors should utilize the prevailing concern for accountability to justify the educational value of their programs. Although university administrators might not always understand the value of competitive forensic activities (Kay, 1990), they are aware of service-learning. Developing closer connections between the university and the community through service-learning is an activity administrators are willing to reward since such projects enhance a university's image in the community. Derryberry (1991) suggests that directors consider ways to involve students in a variety of events, communicate before a variety of audiences, avoid elitism by considering educational opportunities that extend far beyond high school experiences, and continually reexamine the rationale for forensics. Sellnow (1994) has argued for experiential learning as a way to justify forensic programs to administrators. Service-learning is not only consistent with these initiatives but goes beyond experiential learning and service to a commitment for social change.

Service-learning differs from community service and experiential education in the sense that service-learning projects attempt to balance a student's learning with the service provided to the community. This element of service-learning is distinctly different from the approach offered by Preston and Jensen (1995) who approach service activities with the assumption that service must be balanced with "the time spent on pursuing the purpose of the forensic program—namely to spend time training students in the communication skills necessary for success in competition" (p. 1). While forensic programs can provide community service in the way of exhibition debates, speakers bureaus, and showcases (Sellnow, 1994), a key difference between experiential learning, volunteerism, and service-learning is that in service-learning, students learn about the community through addressing some social need. Elements of citizenship and leadership are engaged to bring about a connection between a student's education and community. In short, service-learning attempts to develop social responsibility, an outcome not always evident or intended in more narrowly conceived experiential learning activities.

Service-learning activities can bring much favorable publicity to a program. In fact, Wolff and Gibson (1996) suggest that instructors engaged in service-learning develop a marketing strategy for their program. Their advice is to "keep media relations, alumni, and other key campus offices informed of the program's activities and upcoming events" (p. 45). Preston and Jensen (1995) have argued that community service can bring public relations rewards to programs as well as functioning to recruit students to the program. The result of building a positive public image with the community is that administrators would be more willing to support a program that serves the larger mission of the university in such a publicly acknowledged way than a program serving a more narrowly defined purpose. This can be an important element for programs sustained on small budgets. Although a minimal budget for competitive activities might limit opportunities to win team sweepstakes awards, administrators might be more supportive if service-learning components garnered favorable publicity for the program, department, and university. In a year-end report sent to administrators, forensic directors can not only document the number of students involved in the program, awards won, and season highlights, but also describe the service-learning projects the students engaged in over the season. Such a document communicates the value of a forensics program on at least three levels: as a showcase for a university's talented students, as an educationally sound program that maximizes learning opportunities for those involved, and as a vehicle for connecting the university with the community for desirable social change.

BENEFITS FOR A DIRECTOR

Service-learning can be considered an innovative form of teaching. Service-learning activities require directors to justify projects with regard to the educational needs of students. Not every course in a university catalog can be connected to service-learning nor should every student be required to become involved in the

community. Thus, the development of a service-learning project requires some creativity to ensure that it is pedagogically sound. When community needs can be matched with the objectives of a forensic program and its students, directors are required to assume new roles, develop new means of assessing student learning, reach out to new audiences and constituencies, and engage in additional teaching activities in service-learning projects.

By reaching beyond the classroom and traditional competitive activities to engage students in community service, directors can have an impact as educators in the community. Boyer (1990) described service as the "scholarship of application" where scholars use their knowledge for the benefit of society. More recently, Coye (1997) noted Boyer's revised vision of higher education to include institutions that encourage and reward the "scholarship of engagement."

We need not look far to find social problems in our community. And even if we are absorbed in our teaching, coaching, and writing activities, it is difficult to avoid coverage of our many social problems in the media. One statistic that we found especially troubling was provided by Jonathan Kozol in his 1995 book, *Amazing Grace:* In 1990, only 23,000 black men earned degrees from U.S. colleges and universities while 2.3 million black men and juveniles passed through the nation's jail and prison systems. That so few African American males are in college and so many are in the prison system should be disturbing to all of us. Such knowledge prompted us to ask if colleges and universities should have a role in reversing such statistics? what could we as educators do in our local communities? can we fulfill our obligations as teachers and scholars while serving our communities in a process of social change? Service-learning challenges directors to reflect on their role as prospective agents of social change. In these ways, service-learning can regenerate enthusiasm for teaching after intensive careers pursuing competitive success. Thus, service-learning might be one way of avoiding "burnout," a constant risk of broadbased programs with active directors (Gill, 1990; Jensen, 1995; Pettus & Danielson,

1992). While service-learning consumes time like other forensic activities, directors can find reward in fostering social responsibility in their students, in bringing about positive social change through direct action in the community, and through addressing social problems with their knowledge.

DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING SERVICE LEARNING PROJECTS

Service-learning is an effective pedagogy when projects are well-designed and well-executed. In this section, we discuss the tasks that need to be completed before engaging in service-learning and the tasks that need to be completed after the project to ensure effective design and implementation.

A director must match community needs with the service provided by the academic content of forensics. Directors should initially assess the kinds of resources they could provide to a community. For example, sharing speaking talents with community service agencies would be appropriate. Having students volunteer to serve on the speaker's bureau of the local United Way or other community agencies might be a possibility. Providing basic instruction and training for organizations who need speakers is an option. Organizing a speaker's bureau on community issues can be undertaken. Assisting community agencies in presenting a debate over local issues might be needed. Gifted and talented competitions exist for elementary, middle and high school students (Tallent-Runnels & Candler-Lotven, 1996) but given current demands placed on school instructors, school districts across the country can use volunteers from the community to enhance program offerings for students (Ross, 1993). Sharing interpretive selections with the elderly or with younger children may also be a service worth pursuing. All of these projects are possible but it is up to each individual director to decide what services can be provided. In each case, the director should be able to describe the knowledge and skills students will develop as a result of addressing the community

need.

Once the director has determined what service resources he has available, the university service-learning coordinator should be contacted to see if needs on the part of the community have already been identified. More importantly, Rubin (1996) advises that a faculty member should find out where compatible efforts already exist on campus for starting a service-learning program. Developing institutional ties across campus can save a director an enormous amount of time by preventing duplication of previous efforts by faculty members who already have initiated service-learning programs.

If a university does not have a service-learning coordinator, the volunteer office should be contacted. In the case where a volunteer office does not exist on campus, one can establish contact with community agencies or community representatives to determine if a need exists in the community that the forensic program can address.

A director must decide whether the project will take curricular or co-curricular form. A curricular project requires students to complete a service-learning project as part of an academic requirement for a class. Following this approach, if a university offers academic credit for participation in forensics, a director may require participation in a service-learning project on the syllabus.

Pursuing service-learning as a co-curricular project assumes students should be able to develop their own skills as agents of social change. If a university does not offer academic credit for participation or if only some members of the team are enrolled, then it may make more sense for the director to bring a service-learning proposal to the team in the form of a co-curricular project for the purpose of securing students' commitment. For those students who are skeptical of the personal payoff, a director's enthusiasm may be necessary to convince them to take a chance with the project. Scheuerman (1996) offers these six steps for the development of a co-curricular service-learning project: (1) develop community sites; (2) assist the student or the organization in choosing a site; (3) get

the student or organization to make a commitment to the site; (4) prepare the student or organization for service; (5) engage the student or organization in reflection; and (6) evaluate outcomes.

Both curricular and co-curricular projects require planning. In a curricular project the director must carefully construct the syllabus and make sure a project is available during the semester. In a co-curricular project, the director must have a clear sense of what he hopes the project will do for his students' personal development and must be able to communicate that vision to his students. In both cases, the director must be able to identify tentative learning objectives for his students and balance them against logistical constraints involving students' classes, tournament schedules, employment schedules, and the director's obligations as a faculty member or administrator. Since the development of learning and project objectives can occur only within the logistical constraints of the team's total time commitments, it is important to set realistic goals, provide a single quality service to the community, and ensure a well-processed experience for the students rather than promising more to the community than the program can deliver.

Service-learning projects must be planned in accordance with a sound theoretical framework. Four elements necessary for balancing service with learning can be derived from the work of Kolb (1984). They include (1) an experience on the part of the students where course material can be applied to real world contexts; (2) an opportunity for reflection that may include formal discussion sessions but at a minimum should provide some opportunity for immediate reflection after the experience; (3) reciprocity, which is defined as the learning the student acquires about the community and the system to whom the service is provided; and (4) assessment of what students have learned, which can be measured in terms of personal growth, knowledge of their community, or increased understanding of how academic course content can be applied in real world contexts. In this section, we discuss the conceptual foundations of service-learning in terms of reciprocity, experience and reflection, assessment, and celebration.

A key component of service-learning is the idea of reciprocity. Reciprocity suggests that "All parties in service-learning are learners and help determine what is to be learned. Both the server and those served each, and both learn" (Kendall, 1990, p. 22). In fact, reciprocity helps to differentiate service-learning from other forms of experiential education. Furco (1996) claims that "service-learning programs are distinguished from other approaches to experiential education by their intention to equally benefit the provider and the recipient of the service as well as to ensure equal focus on both the service being provided and the learning that is occurring." Viewing service-learning in this manner suggests that communities are seen as partners in learning, partners that can enhance and increase their abilities to solve social problems. Hence, when considering service-learning projects, directors should consult with service-learning coordinators on campus or community agencies to identify projects where reciprocity is possible.

To be effective, structured opportunities must be provided for students to reflect on their experiences. Experiential educators realize that learning does not occur due to experience itself but in the reflective component of the service experience. Two approaches to reflection are available. Choosing the one most appropriate depends on whether the service-learning project is curricular or co-curricular. If the project is a curricular requirement, reflection occurs most likely after the project is completed. The Campus Outreach Opportunity League (COOL) described the role reflection plays after community service:

> Reflection is a crucial component of the community service-learning experience. Reflection should happen immediately after the experience to discuss it—reactions, stories, feelings, and facts about the issues which may dispel any stereotypes or an individual's alienation from service—and, reflection should place the experience into a broader context, (cited by Mintz & Hesser, 1996, p. 31).

If a service-learning project is co-curricular, reflection can occur during the planning phase, during the service, and after the project. Toole and Toole (1995) describe their adaption of Kolb's (1984) model of experiential learning as a service-learning cycle. Students are engaged in reflective thinking at all stages of the project. As students begin to develop observations during service, analyze their experience, form new understandings, and later consider new applications of their knowledge about their community and subjects, the process spirals from a single point of experience outward, building on each successive experience to form complexes of understandings about community needs and their academic subject matter. Their cycle is characterized as a spiral for three reasons:

1. Reflection infuses all parts of the process rather than being a stage that follows experience.
2. The cycle is shown as a spiral rather than a circle, illustrating that students bring new competence to each successive experience.
3. Although it is common and appropriate for many experiential activities to start with the experience itself, service-learning activities typically begin by identifying a need, creating a project to meet that need, and then planning and preparing for implementation (p. 104).

While the importance of reflection is acknowledged by all service-learning practitioners, the ways to encourage reflection are varied. Reflection can occur either individually or in a group, it can be done either orally or in a written format, it can be class specific or experience specific, and it can include feedback from all or any of the following: persons being served, peers, and program leaders (Porter-Honnet & Poulsen, 1989). Further, Toole & Toole (1995) suggest that instructors can engage students in reflection in at least three ways: "reflection on the task itself; reflection on the social, political, economic, vocational or other contexts of the task; and reflection on related issues of the human spirit, such as questions of

purpose, meaning, suffering, hope, friendship, justice, care, and responsibility" (p. 105).

ASSESSMENT

If service-learning is integrated into a course offering academic credit for forensic participation, some assessment of learning attributed to the service activity should be undertaken. For forensic programs that do not integrate service-learning into a course, co-curricular methods of assessment are appropriate. Finally, it is important to assess the program's impact in addressing the community need. Below, we discuss strategies for curricular, co-curricular, and project assessment.

Curricular assessment of service-learning projects in forensics can take a number of different forms: journals, class discussions, self-assessment, portfolios, team-based learning, and observations. One of the more popular methods to assess learning is through journals. Journals provide a private and safe context for students when sharing their feelings about the service activity and can also be used to help students connect their forensic experiences with the service experience. Class discussions offer faculty a glimpse of how students are understanding and applying the concepts of the course with the service experience. Listening to how other students are processing the experience may serve as a valuable point of reference for all students. Self-assessment requires students to reflect on how the service-learning experience impacted them, how their own attitudes and skills affected their behavior, and how their relationship with the service recipient challenged prior understanding of the service beneficiary population. Portfolios, team-based learning and learning communities are other ways to assess student learning. Asking students to create a portfolio that reflects their role in the service-learning experience can provide information that students can share with fellow students, administrators, and perhaps, future employment interviewers. However, making sure that the information included in the portfolio does not violate confidentiality

of the service recipient should be a primary concern of the student and the instructor. Observations of presentations as well as interactions with the service recipient provides additional evidence of behavioral and cognitive learning.

If students do not receive academic credit for the service-learning project, journal writing, portfolio development, and reflection essays might not be appropriate for co-curricular service-learning projects. However, team discussions and observation of student service recipient interactions might be a more effective way to assess student learning.

Finally, it is important to evaluate the project's impact on the service recipient. Such evaluation methods can include both quantitative and qualitative assessments of the specific population being served. Questionnaires filled out by the forensic student, the service agency, and the service evaluator will offer valuable data about the overall effectiveness of the service-learning project. It is important to remember that a well-documented and well-evaluated service-learning program will provide data that will serve many purposes: evidence of change in student attitudes and skills, evidence that a community need has been met, and evidence that forensic programs can address community needs.

CELEBRATION

An often overlooked yet important element in service-learning is celebrating the project's completion. McKeown claims that "celebration is the recognition not only of participants' successes but also of their vision, effort, and growth" (p. 196). Service-learning contributes to the creation and maintenance of a community spirit. According to McKeown, "in the success of the service all parties join in a recognition of the intrinsic joy or good that results from the service rendered." Recognizing and praising all individuals involved in the service-learning project can be as spontaneous as a pat on the back or as planned as a school or community celebration. Whatever approach to celebrating is chosen,

it is important that all involved appreciate the learning acquired, the friendships made, and the caring that was enacted. Celebrations afford service-learning participants the opportunity to reflect on the past project, celebrate the completion of the project, and motivate others to join in future projects. In these ways, celebration builds community spirit.

CONCLUSION

Hanson (1991) has argued that directors are responsible for setting the educational agenda of a forensic program. If a director decides that educational experiences regarding social responsibility and social change are relevant to educational outcomes, then service-learning activities should be pursued. In some circumstances, service-learning can provide important educational alternatives to competitive experiences. Where service-learning projects can be matched with community needs and program interests, service-learning can provide important benefits for a forensic program. Service-learning can enhance students' understanding of communication concepts, connect students to their communities, engender values of citizenship and social duty, and deliver professional and personal rewards for directors. In these respects, forensic directors should consider service-learning projects to be a part of an educationally sound program.

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Figure 1
Positive Outcomes for Students Involved in Academic Service-Learning

Personal Growth:
        Increased self-esteem and confidence
        Increased personal responsibility
        Increased sense of personal efficacy
Career Development:
        Active exploration of career interests
        Understanding and the world of work
        Specific job skills
        Hiring advantage over others
        Greater confidence in career choice
Social Development:
        Increased interpersonal skills
        Increased tolerance/support for diversity
        Engagement in other community participation
Academic Success/Cognitive Development:
        Belief that service is a positive learning experience
        Better grades
        Persistence to graduate
        Problem solving and critical thinking skills

Forensics In A Correctional Facility

Aaron A. Warriner

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Taxpayers spend billions of dollars each year on the funding of prisons and jails. Each year, the inmate population continues to grow, and recently stood at 1.5 million (DiMascio, 1995), but solutions to the growing prison population, which contains many repeat offenders, remain elusive. On the other hand, although few and far between, educational programs have been proven to help reduce recidivism rates.

Inmates exposed to education programs have lower recidivism rates than do non-participants (The Prison Education Research Project, 1994). Black (1996) supports this assertion, claiming that academic and vocational education are highly efficient ways to reduce recidivism and that money for the education of the incarcerated is well spent. Rios (1996), an expert in methods used to teach prisoners, claims that teaching critical thinking skills and social skills is central to reaching prisoners. Academic and vocational education leads to fewer disciplinary violations during incarceration, increases in employment opportunities, and increases in participation in education upon release, ultimately leading to reduced recidivism rates (Jurg, 1995). Scott (1994) found a direct correlation between communication activity and recidivism. He evaluated the effectiveness of Operation Kick-It, a program in which Texas prisoners engaged in rehabilitation by dissuading others from the decisions they themselves had made. Imprisoned drug offenders described their criminal histories and their consequences to deter young people from committing similar crimes. Recidivism among participants was significantly lower than among non-participants. Other advantageous and serviceable programs, such as the Toastmasters' helpful endeavors to reach inmates, undertake to demonstrate productive communication skills in order to increase

prisoners' awareness of the outside world and to make reintegration less difficult (Black, 1993).

Dallao (1996) demonstrated that constructive, skill-building educational programs are vital to the protection of our society. The communication skills offered in competitive forensics are the same skills needed to help prisoners reenter society successfully. Therefore, educational programs in prisons should be expanded to include the development and facilitation of speech and debate clubs within prison facilities. This paper offers such a rationale and describes and evaluate a program implemented by the Central Michigan University Debate and Forensic Team.

A RATIONALE FOR ESTABLISHING A FORENSIC CLUB AT CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Several researchers have explored the benefits of participation in competitive forensics. Hunt (1994) offers the most complete analysis of specific knowledge and skills that are improved from participation. Hunt asserts that forensics may lead to social skill development in the following ten ways: teaches the function of democratic societies; improves the critical, reflective, and creative thinking skills of competitors; enhances the understanding and application of research; emphasizes the necessity of proof for claims; improves organization and arrangement skills; improves language style usage; develops listening and note taking skills; improves public speaking skills; teaches the ethics of advocacy; and stimulates thinking about current events and controversies. Allen, Berkowitz, and Louden (1995) agree. They found that argumentation and forensics participation increases critical thinking skills. They claimed a clear benefit to competitive forensics, because their study discovered that persons who participate demonstrate a larger gain in critical thinking skills over those acquired in an introductory speech communication course. McMillan and Mancillas (1991) explored the advantages of competitive forensics. Improved self-esteem, more learning, and improved skills are all acquired from participation. In

regard to self-esteem, competitors perceive a sense of personal accomplishment and self-confidence. Educationally, competitors believe they receive "real world" skills, knowledge of people, and the ability to think quickly. Students competing in forensics perceive the development of skills in research, oral communication, critical thinking, organization, and writing. Beyond skill attainment, the competitive nature of forensics stimulates desire, commitment, and high motivation in students. Shelton (1994/1995) asserts that the competitive nature of forensics tournaments drives competitors to spend long hours in preparation, practice and performance, and he also argues that the above communication skills are important for they provide students with a voice in the operation of the world around them, which promotes individual empowerment.

Skills in communication are needed to help prisoners function upon reentering society. Correctional education programs, such as the one proposed, help prevent inmates from returning to crime by making their reintegration into society easier (Dallao, 1996). Social skills must be included within a successful correctional education program (Rios, 1996). Because communication skills are integral to empowerment (Shelton, 1994/1995), they must be taught by qualified individuals, and Shelton argues that forensic educators are the key to providing individual empowerment, through communication skills instruction, to their students.

Although the desire to reach out to the community should be based on altruistic motivations, Preston and Jensen (1995) assert that community service can lead to positive public relations for a forensics team. Therefore, it becomes important for forensic educators and competitors to engage in this type of activity.

In response to the needs discussed above, and in response to a particular call by the Ionia Temporary Correctional Facility [ITCF] in Ionia, Michigan, for such a program, the Central Michigan University Speech and Debate Team helped establish a Prison Speech and Debate Club. At the beginning of the Fall 1996 semester, the Assistant Correctional Athletic Director of the ITCF

sought our assistance in providing resources and expertise that might contribute to the birth of a speech and debate club at the prison. Prison officials argued that programs that invite inmates to utilize and develop intellectual skills contribute to the mission of the correctional facility. Unlike life outside prison walls, there is little to do at a correctional facility. Because individual events and Lincoln-Douglas require a time commitment in order to be successful, they provide an additional "something to do" for the inmates. The coaching staff and students enthusiastically supported visiting the prison and providing a valuable service to the inmates.

PROGRAM AT THE IONIA TEMPORARY CORRECTIONAL FACILITY, IONIA, MICHIGAN

In order to make the first visit possible, several preparatory actions had to be taken. First, the coaching staff and competitors determined the scope of the project. Potentially, we could have provided instruction in each of the events offered at collegiate tournaments. However, the personnel and time resources were simply unavailable to do so. We decided to test the waters by offering three events—poetry interpretation, persuasive speaking, and Lincoln-Douglas debate: poetry because we assumed prison inmates would enjoy sharing and performing poetry they had written during their stay in prison, or poetry written by others; persuasive speaking because it entails research, organization, writing, thinking, argumentation, and presentation skills; and Lincoln-Douglas debate because it offers an organized format for asserting personal claims and dissecting the claims of others on critical issues, and it also offers the most intense level of competition of these three events because participants literally compete directly against one other participant.

We needed to determine how many times we would visit the prison. The busy schedules of forensic competitors and coaches made numerous trips unfeasible. Also, our main objective was to provide guidance in the development of the speech and debate club,

not to operate and monitor it. Just as numerous visits were not feasible, they were also unnecessary in order to accomplish our objective. The team decided upon three visits during a four month period. The first visit would include explanation, demonstration, and discussion of each of the three events we chose to offer. The second visit would include coaching on the content of speeches, poetry selections, and debate cases. The third visit would consist of a Facility Individual Events Tournament, judged and operated by the Central Michigan Speech and Debate team. Although we originally planned three trips, we actually took four. After the second visit, we decided on an extra trip that taught the techniques of delivery.

All participants in this service-learning project had to be lien-cleared by the State of Michigan for entrance into the prison and acquisition of volunteer status. Any student who presented a security threat would be identified through this process. Each volunteer completed a form on which they had to disclose their name, birth date, driver's license, Social Security number, height, and weight. In our case, this information needed to be completed and sent in at least one month prior to visitation.

Dates and times needed to be determined. The chaotic nature of volunteer schedules made this difficult. Although we originally suspected Saturdays would be best for volunteers, the first two visits occurred on a Thursday. Times also needed to be negotiated. Thursday trips usually began in the afternoon and concluded in the evening. Saturday trips began early in the morning and led into the early afternoon.

Materials needed to be sent ahead of time. Basic information about the events, especially Lincoln-Douglas debate, was sent to the ITCF prior to our arrival, which allowed persons interested in the activity to peruse materials and to develop some knowledge before the first workshop.

The Visits

All visits entailed several constants. Each time, volunteers

were required to present identification, to leave all valuables in a locker, and to submit to a body search from an officer before entering the facilities.

The first visit was the most crucial as it was the most intensive. Approximately fifty prisoners attended the workshop, which included an explanation, demonstration, and discussion of each event. The agenda was determined prior to arrival (see Appendix A). The inmates were invited to begin work on one or more of the three events presented. At the conclusion of the presentations, prisoners were welcome to introduce themselves to the volunteers and have short conversations before we left the prison.

The second visit was designed to provide the inmates with one-to-one coaching sessions regarding the content of their performance material. The athletic director of the ITCF established three work stations to work with CMU student coaches. Each inmate received feedback on the quality of his work. Poetry selections were evaluated in regards to their literary quality and performability. Persuasion texts were evaluated in regards to their organization, use of evidence, and stylistic choices. Lincoln-Douglas, with the smallest number of participants, was explained in more detail during the second visit to inmates interested in debating "ebonies in education."

We realized that an additional visit was necessary. Few, if any, of the inmates had any experience in public speaking. Therefore, each inmate was given an opportunity to rehearse their events. All speakers performed and received feedback on each of their events from two coaches. Performances were presented on a stage built by the inmates under the athletic director's supervision.

The fourth visit was the most exciting and, perhaps, rewarding visit of the four, as we participated in the first ITCF individual events tournament. We simulated a college tournament with eleven competitors in poetry interpretation, five competitors in persuasive speaking, and two competitors in Lincoln-Douglas debate. Although small in relation to an average college tournament, a total of eighteen entries was an encouraging sign.   Poetry had two

preliminary rounds judged by CMU volunteers, and the top six made finals. With only five competitors in persuasion, each persuasive speaker qualified for finals; likewise, preliminary rounds of Lincoln-Douglas debate were unnecessary with just two speakers. The top six poetry performances, the top five persuasive speeches and the only Lincoln-Douglas debate were performed in an all-purpose hall. Inmates who did not compete were allowed to watch the finalist performances. At one point, forty spectators were present. Scores were tabulated after the final round performances, and shortly thereafter the awards ceremony began in front of an audience of approximately sixty inmates. Certificates were given to each participant, indicating they had successfully completed the requirements of the program. Rank-ordered certificates were given to the six poetry finalists, the five persuasion finalists and the two Lincoln-Douglas debaters.

THE PROGRAM'S ASSESSMENT

We assessed the success of the 1996-1997 program in four ways: student experience summaries, ITCF verbal and written responses, evidence of inmate involvement, and public responses.

Student experience summaries assessed the value of the program from the volunteers' perspectives. Several student participants wrote 2-5 page reflection papers. In their papers, students were asked to discuss what they learned about themselves, what they learned about those they coached, and what role speech communication played in the success of this project. Although apprehensive at first, students shared stories of interpersonal growth. Two excerpts illustrate the nature of the service-learning project, for students commented on what they and the inmates learned, and on how they served, and were served by, the inmates. One student reflected upon the damaging nature of stereotypes:

> I think that the prisoners taught us about as much as we
> had taught them.   Our society has an image of

prisoners as really bad people. This is probably true. At the same time, however, I guess that I discovered for the first time that these inmates were also parents, children, uncles and brothers. They had feelings and talents just like everyone else. The circumstances that placed them in prison didn't really concern me; it was really exciting to see these men open up and share their stories in their poetry and other pieces. These men had a lot of untapped talents that could easily be brought to fruition with work. The stereotypes and barriers that had been established at the thought of doing this kind of project were slowly brought down. (Immings, 1997)

Another student reflected a new understanding of human nature:

At first, I was a little apprehensive. Would the guys be mean and cause problems? Would it be uncomfortable being in such close quarters with convicts? When I look back to those early feelings, I am ashamed that I could be so close-minded, and well, snobby. I think one of the inmates put it best when he said in his persuasion speech, "there is good and bad centered in each of us." Nothing could be more true. That is what I learned from this experience. (Gerding, 1997)

From student papers and informal discussions, the following conclusions can be drawn. First, student volunteers changed their perceptions of prisoners through interpersonal interaction with them. They began to see beyond the crimes that were committed, and to focus more on the person inside. These changing perceptions helped eliminate the stereotypes that existed about prisoners before they entered prison. Second, students addressed the educational value of sharing their knowledge with others. By committing their time and

expertise, students experienced the value of serving community needs. Third, students recognized the severe communication deficiencies held by the inmates. Many had difficulty organizing their thoughts, articulating clearly, and using appropriate nonverbal gestures. However, a few hours with each inmate helped alleviate these deficiencies. Due to an astounding willingness to work and to develop their previously untapped potential, inmates improved dramatically during each workshop.

We also received written responses from officials at the Ionia Temporary Correctional Facility. These responses came throughout the program as well as after its conclusion. The Deputy Warden and the Athletic Director, with whom we worked closely, each commented on how much inmates enjoyed the program and how they believed the skills being learned by inmates were going to help them upon release. One letter written by ITCF officials indicated that participation in the program "made a difference" after one prisoner's release. We learned that an inmate who did a persuasive speech on child abuse continued to spread his message throughout the community. We expect more written accounts as more inmates are released from prison and enter society.

The strongest evidence of the program's worth came directly from the prisoners. Excitement among inmates after the tournament was evident. Fortunately, their excitement was not simply a temporary adrenaline rush. The inmates have shown a commitment to continuing the program through the development of the ITCF Rhetoricians' Society. On their own, prisoners developed by-laws for their new organization, an organizational purpose, membership requirements, officers, voting procedures, and consequences for ignoring the group's rules. In so doing, the prisoners created their own speech and debate club. Currently, the by-laws for the speech and debate club are under review by prison officials and have yet to be approved.

As Preston and Jensen (1995) assert, community service programs will bring positive publicity to a forensic program. This particular service learning project was covered by our school

newspaper, the community newspaper, and even the British Broadcasting Corporation [BBC]. In addition, the forensic team received an award from the Office of Student Life at Central Michigan University for outstanding community service. Never before had the Central Michigan forensics team received so much coverage and praise.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SIMILAR PROGRAMS

First, volunteers should ask for an orientation session from prison officials before entering the facility and interacting with inmates, for one must observe a variety of rules related to volunteer status and interaction. A formal orientation program should be expected so that no one is uncertain about what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior inside the prison. We have begun a similar program at the Saginaw Correctional Facility in Freeland, Michigan. Before entrance into the prison, we received a detailed orientation from the prison chaplain and the assistant deputy warden. Included in the orientation were materials regarding volunteer status and a volunteer contract. Orientation programs help college students assimilate into a culture most have never entered. All students have visions of prison life through its depiction on television, yet they are often ill-prepared for the varied emotions they will experience when entering the bleak, depressing home of some of our nation's most violent men.

Second, volunteers should go by their first names only. Disclosing one's last name to a convicted criminal could be potentially dangerous for two reasons: greater amounts of disclosure can lead to the perception of friendship, and prison volunteers are not allowed to be a friend or relative of a prisoner within the facility. As soon as prisoners perceive a volunteer as a friend, they may try to contact that individual, which is a violation of the volunteer relationship. Prisoners have committed crimes and may later participate in criminal behavior after release. Providing last names makes obtaining information about volunteers quite easy.

Everything must be done to prevent students from becoming victims of any criminal activity. This means limiting information about them as much as possible. It may seem impersonal, but this particular service learning project demands that participants adopt a "better safe than sorry" philosophy.

Third, a quantitative assessment should be taken. Because ours was an experimental, preliminary service-learning project, rigorous, quantitative methods of analysis were not used. The development and execution of the project was quite time consuming. However, the positive reactions are a sign that we should accumulate some quantitative data. This quantitative data could take two forms. First, researchers could do pre-tests and post-tests to see if communication traits, such as apprehension, aggressiveness, argumentativeness, and dogmatism are influenced by participation in the program. Second, the recidivism rates of participants in the program can be tracked. Recidivism rates are frequently tracked in relation to other variables, such as participation in athletic programs. The social value of this service-learning program can be evaluated by tracking the percentage of program participants who return to prison. To facilitate such analysis, records must be maintained by the prison, as well as by researchers.

Fourth, the number of events offered to inmates should be expanded. We began by offering poetry, persuasion, and Lincoln-Douglas debate. This year, we will be offering prose interpretation as well. However, offering only four events may be an inefficient way to teach each skill. But, unfortunately, a volunteer group's ability to offer numerous events is dependent upon the resources available to them.

Fifth, technology should be harnessed to allow for inter-facility competitions and distance learning. Teleconferencing systems are available, which may allow one facility's team to compete directly against another facility's team, in either debate or individual events. Even without teleconferencing systems, videotapes can be used to record performances and evaluate them to establish comparisons between competitors at different facilities. In

February of 1998, we videotaped performances at each of the facilities we served. At our annual individual events tournament, we critiqued them, ranked them, and offered sweepstakes points based on those ranks. Scores were calculated and awards were determined. Offering an inter-facility tournament encourages inmates to support each other through teamwork. The more advanced the technology, the greater the capacity for inter-facility competition. In addition, the use of teleconferencing can make reaching inmate populations less time consuming, less expensive, and less dangerous. Establishing conference networks would allow one initial presentation to be aired to numerous facilities. Instead of traveling to independent facilities, which takes time and money, conferencing systems would make it possible to reach more prisoners without leaving the premises of the university. Security is very tight in prisons, yet any contact with an inmate poses a potential risk for the volunteer. A volunteer will be safer with less interpersonal contact.

Unfortunately, money is limited, and most forensic budgets cannot support an exponential expansion for such a service-learning project. Coaches and teams should write grant proposals so that service-learning programs can become a reality.

CONCLUSION

This paper described and evaluated a valuable service-learning project implemented by the Central Michigan University Debate and Forensic Team. As free citizens, we often make the mistake of ignoring the lives of prisoners. Because almost every prisoner will eventually be released into our communities, we should not ignore persons who live behind prison walls. Offering service-learning programs that empower inmates to live in a democratic society are valuable and worthwhile. But correctional facilities cannot do it alone, and they need the help of a concerned forensic community that is willing to serve and learn through the expertise that coaches and teams have to offer.

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Appendix A

CMU Speech and Debate Workshop
Lincoln-Douglas Debate, Persuasion, and Poetry Interpretation
Thursday, November 14, 1996

Tentative Itinerary

3:15 p.m.	Depart for Ionia Temporary Correctional Facility
5:15 p.m.	Arrive for Processing
5:30 p.m.	Introductions, Overview of the Workshop.
5:45 p.m.	Lecture: A. Stock issues for a proposition of policy B. Developing a prima facie case
6:30 p.m.	Exhibition Debate
7:00 p.m.	Discussion of the Debate
7:30 p.m.	Persuasion A. Explanation B. Demonstration C. Discussion
8:00 p.m.	Poetry Interpretation A. Explanation B. Demonstration C. Discussion
8:30 p.m.	Depart for CMU

Service-Learning in Forensics: An Undergraduate's Perspective

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Between all of the endless hours of researching, writing, revising, memorizing, practicing, and perfecting, the value of learning and applying communication skills can be lost. The undergraduate competitor can become consumed by the competitive aspect of forensics and forget that the ultimate goal of forensics is to use the skills of communication, not just in competition, but in the real world, too. The benefits of forensic activities are widely accepted within the forensic community; however, little attention has been devoted to applying these experiences to other contexts. In 1996, Professor Edward Hinck, director of forensics at Central Michigan University, suggested that the forensic team should participate in a service-learning project at the Ionia Temporary Correctional Facility in Ionia, Michigan. The goal of the project was to introduce, teach, and develop a forensic program within the prison context so that participants could develop more effective communication skills. Ultimately, the inmates would be self-sufficient and would advance their program without our assistance.

ITCF SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECT

The service project with the Ionia Temporary Correctional Facility was structured so that we would visit four times. In the first visit, we introduced ourselves and the program by giving exhibition speeches in the three events we would teach the inmates. The events were Lincoln-Douglas debate, persuasion, and poetry interpretation. I gave a persuasive speech and a poetry interpretation. The initial visit gave the prisoners and us an opportunity to become oriented with each other. It also provided me with a way to cope with

nervous feelings that I experienced going into the project. I had never been in a prison, nor had I ever expected to be in one. I had preconceived ideas regarding how a prison was run and what the prisoners were like, and I had applied societal stereotypes to both. I can honestly say that I was very closed minded going into this project and this may have played a role in the amount of nervousness that I experienced.

The purpose of the second visit was to separate into the three groups. I led the largest group, approximately twenty-five men, which was poetry. I was not sure what to expect from these men, for I did not know about their educational status, and I wondered whether they would understand and comprehend what I would teach them that night. During the meeting I discussed what poetry interpretation is, its format, and its purpose. I worked in very small groups in order to give more direct attention to each participant. At first, I felt uncomfortable doing this because I talked to them at a very close distance. I knew that in order to address each person's particular needs and questions, I would have to conduct one-to-one conferences. This gave the participants an opportunity to ask questions about the event or the program. About halfway through the session I began to relax, for I realized these men had just made some poor choices in life and that they deserved to be treated like anyone else because they were serving their time. The third visit was strictly one-to-one coaching. The prisoners had prepared materials and needed the coaching assistance that any competitor would need before a tournament. I did not attend this particular visitation because I had a family commitment. Professor Edward Hinck and one other participant conducted the visit, working one-to-one with every inmate who had prepared materials.

Finally, the last visit consisted of a tournament and an awards ceremony. The tournament had two preliminary rounds and a final round. I judged the poetry preliminaries and the Lincoln-Douglas debate final round, and I also participated in the awards ceremony. At this point, I was no longer nervous, for I had finally overcome my uncertainties and was delighted to see the

progress that these men had made.

The ITCF service-learning project was a valuable lesson in forensics for me and the inmates. By focusing on preliminary expectations, outcomes, and personal and group growth, I shall explain how other forensic teams may wish to pursue different but worthy educational goals.

PRELIMINARY EXPECTATIONS

Before going into a prison, training and orientation are vital for the success of any project of this nature. All persons need to overcome any uncertainties they might experience. For instance, I had mixed feelings about working with prisoners, for I thought I knew about prisons and what prisoners were like.

Students and coaches should be prepared for the prison routine, for rules are very formal and strict. We had to get background checks before we were able to go to the prison. Once there, we had to have a manifest that cleared each item we had on our persons. Everything from each pen and pencil to every sheet of paper had to be accounted for, and I was intimidated by this level of security. I wondered who was being treated like a prisoner. Before we could enter the first set of doors that led into the prison, we were frisked and made to take off our shoes and socks so guards could make sure that we were not smuggling anything in. We were marked with a fluorescent stamp and had to carry our identification with us at all times, for without identification, guards would consider us prisoners. Basically, it was our ticket to freedom again. All of us had to become accustomed to the entire procedure. The first time was the most intimidating, but things got easier and eventually became protocol.

OUTCOMES OF PARTICIPATING IN SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECTS

Service-learning projects integrate academic learning and

relevant community service. By applying skills learned in the forensic community to the prison context, the prisoners and I achieved outcomes that were equally beneficial.

One specific outcome of the service-learning project was the ability to adapt my knowledge to my audience. For example, on the second visit, I worked with prisoners who wanted to compete in poetry interpretation. After about fifteen minutes of explaining the event and how to do it, one prisoner raised his hand and asked: "What is the point in this? And what can we take away from this?" I wondered how I should answer someone who had never competed before. I replied that no matter what occupation you have or whatever you do in your life, you will always need to express yourself in a logical fashion, which forensics teaches you to do. Whether persuading someone to act a certain way or creatively moving an individual with emotions displayed through interpretation, you can always benefit from the use of competent communication. By sharing my forensic skills and talents, I applied basic communication theory to a real world context.

ADJUSTING FORENSIC JARGON TO A NON-FORENSIC COMMUNITY

In demonstrating events and coaching the prisoners, I caught myself, and other team members, using forensic jargon, which can be overwhelming to someone not involved in forensics. Coaches and competitors communicate in forensic language, which, to others, may be meaningless words. This project forced me to explain forensic language and terminology to the prisoners. Forensic jargon, such as interpretation books, schematics, out-rounds, etc., are terms that persons in the forensic community easily understand, but that can confuse others. For instance, referring to the interp book, I instead used "script" and when referring to schematics, "schedule" was more appropriate. Small changes such as these can help someone unfamiliar with the language that our forensic culture uses. Many inmates had little education because of their social and/or

cultural background, so forensic language had to be altered so that the activity was comprehensible. Had the forensic team not made this change, I believe that the number of participants would have fallen dramatically because the prisoners-as-students would have been needlessly intimidated.

BENEFITS OF FEEDBACK

Through this project, I was able to receive outside feedback on my competition pieces. After performing my speeches for exhibition, the inmates gave considerable criticism. I appreciated their comments because they allowed me to become aware of whether I clearly communicated my message.

Forensic judges set their own criteria for a piece. By performing before different audiences, the communicator can receive helpful feedback on a performance that forensic critics may not have thought of. This was something I dealt with during the first visit. In writing speeches or choosing interpretation pieces, competitors have a tendency to choose something that would be "good" for forensics. They write and target their speeches to a forensic judge, who has certain expectations from the guidelines of competition for competitors in the event. Many times the educational value can be lost, for one may ask: "Am I doing this to win or to become a more competent communicator?" A true test of whether competitors can be effective communicators is: Can their speeches have an impact on their audiences in any context?

I wrote my speeches for a forensic community and, upon realizing this, I discovered that I would probably offend most, if not all, of the men who were in my audience at the prison. My persuasion was on inhalant abuse. I stated the dangers associated with the use, the cause of the upward trend to use inhalants, and provided both national and personal solutions. I asked my audience to visit junior and senior high schools and to educate the youth in their communities about the dangers of inhalant abuse. Almost all of my personal solutions required listeners to act outside of their

current situation. Instead, I relied on my ability to adapt to my audience: I asked them to talk to loved ones in their lives—children, grandchildren, brothers, and sisters. My adaptation made the message more relevant for my audience. I continually asked myself whether I would be offended if I were in their situation. Audience adaptation is vital to the success of any service-learning project.

My other performance for the prisoners was poetry. The theme concerned who and what defines beauty. The piece, written from a female perspective, is mainly directed towards a female audience. I wondered how any of these men would relate to what I was saying. I knew that my purpose was not to entertain or move them emotionally in any way, but I did not want them to tune me out as soon as I started to speak about women and beauty. Unfortunately, I could not adapt this piece to the audience. But after I finished, I learned that many of the prisoners enjoyed my performance. Many men approached me personally after the presentation and thanked me for doing such a great job. This really helped set my nerves at ease. I started to relate to them because I perceived that they tried to relate to me.

AUDIENCE ADAPTATION WITH A DIVERSE GROUP

The inmates varied in every regard: by age, racially, socio-economically, educationally, and ethnically. When working with such a group, one must remain continually sensitive to all persons because a communicator can create barriers in the communication process.

Another issue I had to cope with was my gender: How would I relate to a group of all men? I was one of two women, besides the occasional prison guards, who were involved in this project. From the moment that we walked into the prison all eyes were on the two of us. To get to the area where we would be speaking, we walked through the prison courtyard that was surrounded by living quarters. Some inmates whistled, issued cat calls, and pointed to us as we walked through the prison courtyard.

I felt very uncomfortable, my stomach became upset because of nervousness, and my face turned red. I was uneasy and scared.

      After we arrived at the pavilion, we were seated in chairs set up at the front of the room. I felt intimidated by the gathering group. My biggest fear was that they would not respect me because I was a woman. However, I discovered that they appreciated and wanted our help. As soon as we began our presentation, I felt welcomed and supported by the audience, and the majority of men were enthusiastic about the project.

      In a forensic community everyone has a commonality and similar interests. I took a while to realize that the prisoners had the same commonality in becoming more effective communicators. So, we and the prisoners had the same goals. One of my main goals in this service project was to keep an open mind about the participants and their speeches. Being able to cope with the diversity of the group proved to be one of the most beneficial outcomes for me. At the same time, I think that the majority of men we worked with at the prison also learned to adapt to the diversity between them and us; thus, equally beneficial outcomes occurred on both parts.

TIME MANAGEMENT IN SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECTS

      Being able to juggle seventeen credit hours, ten or more hours of work, many hours of practicing and competing in forensics, and maintaining some social life with friends and family, can make it difficult to find a four-to-five hour block of time to volunteer. Time management is a skill that is learned, not acquired, and as a competitor on a team that demands a great deal of time and energy, one quickly learns how to deal with schedules.

      After I found the time to fit the project into my schedule, I felt a sense of satisfaction. I gave my time and expertise to people who wanted to become more competent communicators, thus bettering themselves. After each visit to the prison, I felt a great deal of contentness and happiness for being part of this project. Each time I could see individuals developing as communicators and,

knowing that I was partly responsible for their progress, this made me very enthusiastic about continuing with the project. Not only were the prisoners learning from the service project, but so was I. Each time we went, I could see more transformation within the individual participants. For example, one individual changed remarkably. At first he was shy and nervous about participating, but as time went on he gradually became more enthusiastic about his potential. In fact, he even made it to the final round of persuasive speaking. Each time I witnessed changes like this it compelled me to go back again no matter how I would have to adjust my schedule in order to fit in the project.

CARING FOR PRISONERS AND THEIR FUTURES

The greatest outcome of the entire experience, for me, was extending my knowledge of forensics beyond competition and to develop a sense of caring for the inmates. Prisoners are members of a prison community, and those with whom we worked would soon return to their former communities. Instead of promoting rehabilitation, many people in society write off inmates as no good—I was one who thought that way. By participating in this project, which motivated me to develop a sense of caring for these individuals and their futures, I was able to see past the stereotypes that society and I had placed on them. I realized that some people make mistakes, that they pay for their mistakes, and that they can change their actions in order to return to their communities rehabilitated. The dedication that our forensic team exhibited to these prisoners and their futures showed that we wanted to help them. We were able to incorporate a skill or talent, learned in the classroom, into a project that would benefit everyone. Our team's guidance and support was widely accepted by all individuals involved. I had a great sense of pride and admiration for each one of the prisoners. They were able to set aside their pasts and look at the benefits of this project and what it could do for their futures. For example, one person in the program told us that he wanted to

participate in this program because he "was on his way out." He planned to apply to a university and wanted to better his communication skills for the future. I was impressed with his dedication to improvement, for he set aside his past and would now work on his future.

GROWING AS AN INDIVIDUAL

I learned, as an undergraduate student and competitor, that my life can be more complete by expanding the contexts in which I use the knowledge and skills learned in school and in competition. I can take all of these valuable lessons into the real world. This service-learning project provided me with a tool to utilize and demonstrate my abilities. My future goals are to teach and coach, and this project provided me with a valuable application practice. Service-learning projects can test a competitor's knowledge and skills, and provide a means by which a communicator can transfer these to a non-forensic related arena.

COMMITMENT IS FUNDAMENTAL

No matter what service-learning project you wish to take part in, it is important to remain committed to the project. The success of our project was due in part to the fact that we had three coaches, and at least four dedicated team members who were willing to put forth the time and energy into this project. I noticed that the prisoners became committed to succeeding in the program, and each time they verbally expressed how much they looked forward to seeing us again. At first I thought this was because we were people outside of their everyday routine. But after spending two sessions with them, I saw that they wanted us to be there so that they could better themselves. We were their tools to help them grow.

Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the third session. When I returned for the fourth visit, I saw that the disappointment among the prisoners still lingered. After expressing my regrets, I

gained much of the goodwill I had lost. But, I clearly understood that the project's success was based on total commitment, and that the participants would not be committed if one were not. Having established a working relationship with the participants, they will continue to look to you for guidance and support.

CONFIDENCE IS NECESSARY

In order to be successful, you must have confidence in what you are doing. Not only must you personally be confident that you are doing a good job, but you must also believe in the project. Just as you would never step into a forensic round of competition looking nervous and unsure of yourself and your speech, you should never approach this type of project without complete confidence in your mission. For example, even though I was nervous going into the first visitation, I knew that it was vital that I remained focused on the goals and not on the fact that I was working with prisoners. The forensic team had to maintain confidence in its goals or the entire project could fail. The prisoners could not respect us or believe in our project if we did not show confidence in our mission.

CONCLUSION

Service-learning projects in forensic programs can be beneficial for the team, for individual competitors, and especially for the target audience. The experiences of forensic activities can be applied in a non-forensic context and provide much needed benefits within the community at large. The service-learning experience truly represents proactive education, allowing the enrichment for all who are involved. Service-learning projects create an entirely new dimension to the forensic experience.

Bridging Scholarly Theory
and Forensic Practice:
Toward a More Pedagogical
Model of Rhetorical Criticism

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At some time during a teacher's career he will be asked to
explain why he is asking students to perform in a certain way or
to carry out a particular task. His answer will determine
whether he is an educator or [simply] a trainer, whether he
himself is educated, and whether he has considered the reason
for his beliefs. The educator knows the "why" of what he does,
and to him theory and conceptual knowledge take precedence
over conditioned responses. It is not enough for the teacher to
say, "It's always been done that way." A student, peer, or even
a supervisor will still want to know why. Pedagogy is generated
by theory, and theory comes from a philosophy which is
grounded in certain values. When one wants to know what
influences account for the present state of affairs, he cannot
ignore the past. Knowledge of the past helps the teacher
formulate both answers and questions for the future, as well as
the present. So it is with forensic education.[1]

The academic discipline of speech communication and the
activity of intercollegiate forensics are natural allies. Speech scholars
seek to identify and understand communication principles by studying
communication practices, while students of public speaking aim to
enhance their personal communication skills by practicing recognized
principles. Collectively, these two traditions represent a unique
intersection of theory and practice. Indeed, the emergence of speech as
an independent curriculum in universities and the growth of competitive

speech and debate are inextricably tied to one another.[2] Yet despite their related aims and common origins, speech as a discipline and speech as an activity are frequently ignorant of one another, particularly to the detriment of forensics.

Perhaps no better illustration of this pedagogical harm exists than in the platform event of rhetorical criticism (RC).[3] In this essay, I contend that competitors in the event of rhetorical criticism, or communication analysis (CA) as it is alternatively called,[4] are locked into a model that poses serious questions about the educational value of the event. In an effort to narrow the ever widening gap between theory and practice and to heighten the pedagogical value of contest rhetorical criticism, I propose to chart briefly the chief features of the existing RC model, to identify the limitations posed by that model, and to suggest several viable alternatives.

FORENSIC PRACTICE: WHY ALL RHETORICAL CRITICISMS SOUND THE SAME

Charting the chief features of the existing model for rhetorical criticism is a necessarily risky endeavor because it potentially obfuscates the uniqueness of each speech. Nevertheless, certain identifiable traits pervade the event of rhetorical criticism; moreover, judges police and thereby reinforce these traits through their judging practices. To the extent that judges reward speeches with these features and sanction speeches without them, students have a strong disincentive to deviate. Hence, competitively successful RCs possess these traits almost without exception, and in the process establish the standard or model that others must emulate. The existing model of rhetorical criticism entails several key topical and structural features.

Topic Selection

At first glance, it might appear that the topics for RCs are wonderfully heterogeneous. But closer inspection reveals that the topics

of successful speeches are governed by three principles: recency, shock value, and obscurity. Consider a student with a strong personal interest in Malcolm X, who wants to analyze his pivotal 1963 Message to the Grassroots Address. Recognizing that most competitive RCs examine contemporary discourses, a coach might discourage that topic. But the student persists, and one could not think of a good reason why modern discourses are more deserving of critical attention than historical discourses. The coach's concerns were realized throughout the season though, for judges critiqued the topic on the principle of recency, as the following examples from the student's ballots illustrate:

> You're in a *big time ditch* trying to pull of [sic] such an old artifact-your [sic] going to have to create *massive* justification, [and] I'm not sure you can. (emphasis original)

> Reason for rank: Out-of-date topic.

> Malcolm X speech-good for a class, but for this event? Where's the immidiacy [sic]? Opponents had more immediate [sic] and accessible artifacts.

> First, using speeches by Malcolm X or Martin Luther King, Jr. are usually frowned upon. Second, there are many more *recent* speeches that you could use whose author isn't as problematic to the speech community, (emphasis added)

The four judges quoted here all explicitly or implicitly sanctioned the speech on Malcolm X, based not on the quality or significance of the artifact or the analysis, but on the age of the artifact. Worse still, none of the judges suggested why a recent subject is more worthy of critical attention.

> Judges tend to reward speakers who analyze controversial and

obscure artifacts, while penalizing those who examine mainstream or landmark texts. Reinforcing this trend, one judge wrote of the speech on Malcolm X, "Malcolm X is a subject that should *never* be done-he, in general, has been overdone. When you take this to NFA's you'll fall quickly. You have a great presentational style-don't let your *topic* hold you back" (emphasis added). This statement implies that the discourses of Malcolm X have been thoroughly exhausted critically, and that nothing new of value can be said. As a result of judging practices that reward both shock value and obscurity, RCs increasingly examine fringe rhetoric to the exclusion of mainstream discourses. For instance, one rarely judges a rhetorical criticism of presidential rhetoric, despite the fact that the president arguably exercises great influence on public policy; similarly, the scarcity of film and television criticisms is troublesome in light of the overwhelming influence these mediums exercise.

Form and Structure

        The formal and structural similarities of competitive RCs are even more deeply ingrained than the topical similarities. In rhetorical criticism, a three-point organizational pattern featuring method, application, and implications has achieved a doxatic status.[5] The structural similarities of RC extend far beyond the overall organizational pattern to a sub-structural level as well. This can be seen by examining each of these three points in greater depth.
        The first main point of competitive RC is usually dedicated to identifying or delineating the primary elements, tenets, or components of a method appropriate to the analysis of a particular type of discourse. The term "method" assumes a very narrow and specific meaning within this model. In forensics, a rhetorical method most often refers to a student's reduction of a practicing critic's rhetorical analysis to a set of key principles. The original analysis should have been published in a communication journal during the past five years, for scholarly work undertaken more than five years ago has apparently been debunked by

the forensic community which critiques methods, like artifacts, using the principle of recency. For a student to be successful in RC, the method must also be justified as appropriate to the discourse being analyzed. Not only is this structural feature policed by most judges, forensic scholarship encourages it. Cataloguing the objectives of contest RC, Dean argues, "The basic question the student should answer [at the outset of the methods section] is: 'Why?' Why is this method of analysis fitting, appropriate, insightful, and/or unique to the given artifact?"[6] A justification is typically phrased: "To the extent that Some Scholar's essay published in Some Communication Journal addresses Some Rhetoric, it is appropriate to guide our analysis of Some Text."

The second main point of competitive RC is the analysis or application section. There, students take the rhetorical components, principles, features, or tools they identified in the first point and utilize, employ, adopt, or apply them as a framework, guide, or means of explaining, understanding, or interpreting the artifact. Regardless of the precise phraseology selected, students proceed in their speeches to locate the specifics of their method within their artifact. Most often, this identification process follows the same order in which the key tenets of the method were discussed in the first point. The student critic continues: "The first principle of the rhetoric is (insert principle). This trait can be seen in the following statement." The student critic then quotes a passage of text that perfectly illustrates the principle. In short, the method drives the analysis section. Although the RC model is subject to criticism on many levels, it is this aspect to which I object most strenuously, and I will discuss the reasons in section two.

The third and final section of most competitive RC is the implications or effects. For much of the history of the event, the third main point of rhetorical criticisms was dedicated almost entirely to proving that the rhetor was a rhetorical success or failure because she or he had deployed or failed to deploy all of the key principles in the method. Like method justification, efficacy assessments are encouraged by forensic scholarship. Explains Dean, "The critic's [final] responsibility [is] to render a judgment regarding the artifact's ultimate

success or failure."[7] This task was usually accomplished by quoting experts who either avowed or disavowed the success of the rhetor, by citing statistics that showed how the rhetor met or failed to meet stated goals, or by noting the cultural and social changes that had or had not taken place as a result of the rhetor's discourse. This aspect of RC, however, is perhaps not so stringently policed by judges as it once was, and as a result, the content of the third section has shifted somewhat. Today, it frequently incorporates reflection on, evaluation, or assessment of the rhetorical method. Students spend a minute or two highlighting the limitations of the method, and ways to extend or improve the method. This change in the content of the third point has been embraced by a large number of judges, who, of course, now police it.

SCHOLARLY THEORY: WHY ALL RHETORICAL CRITICISM IS NOT THE SAME

Topic Selection

Although I do not oppose contest rhetorical criticisms that examine contemporary or controversial discourses, I do object to present forensic practices that explore such discourses to the exclusion of more historical and mainstream rhetoric. By encouraging the student critic to write speeches solely about recent artifacts-and ensuring such criticism through ballots-coaches and judges foster the misleading impression that the analysis of historical discourses is less important to our understanding of rhetoric and its function in the world. This impression is dangerous on a number of levels. First, criticisms of historical discourses or public addresses have the potential to yield significant insights about culture, history, and the nature of society. In an essay addressing the key challenges faced by the field of speech communication in its scholarship, Martin Medhurst writes:

> [W]e must both promote and study public address as a cultural force that shaped and continues to shape the

American experiment. We must learn to articulate, on a sustained basis, the intellectual and cultural rationale for studying American oratory. . . . Given the great opportunities that are available in rhetorical-cultural studies, it is nothing short of appalling how few scholars . . . have sought to make the link between America's oratorical tradition and its cultural, educational, religious, political, civic, and economic heritage. ... [We must study] the place of oratory in society [and] oratory as a force that shaped American character, society, and social institutions.[8]

Historical studies and analyses of oratorical masterpieces are important because they contribute to our understanding of the way rhetoric functions in the world. They make seminal contributions to theory. Touchstones demand critical attention, explains Edwin Black in his landmark 1965 book, *Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method,* because they inform our expectations about what "rhetorical discourse is capable of doing."[9] This statement suggests that practicing critics do not frown upon-as the forensic community does-the analysis of canonical texts. On the contrary, scholarly critics emphatically encourage it. Nor do practicing critics devalue-as the forensic community does-the analysis of texts that have previously received critical attention. If anything, writes David Zarefsky, "[W]e need more comparative studies of the same rhetorical objects, exemplified by the symposium on Lincoln's Second Inaugural in the first issue of *Communication Reports."*[10] Practicing critics recognize that texts can profitably be examined from a variety of perspectives, for each can contribute to rhetorical theory and to our understanding of a particular case. Thus, one wonders why forensic judges should sanction students who would assess rhetorical touchstones, such as the speeches of Malcolm X? or Martin Luther King?

An additional way that the criticism of historical rhetoric can enhance our understanding of communication and history is through

historical revisionism. The dangers of blindly accepting that certain texts, and not others, are in the canon of public address has been carefully documented elsewhere.[11] But scholarly critics agree that the canon must constantly be reassessed, for the very notion of a canon functions rhetorically to privilege certain social, political, and economic interests over others. Only by studying the canon's construction can scholars understand the ways that it empowers and disempowers various social groups. Zarefsky stresses the importance of historical revisionism:

> [W]e need to deal with all the same problems of canonization which confront our colleagues in literature. On the one hand, we do need to revisit what by common consent are a body of great speeches. Mohrmann is right in noting with surprise that many of these "great speeches" have never been subjected to careful rhetorical study. Presumably, works acquire canonical status for some reason, and renewed attention to the "classic" texts might help us to understand those reasons. At the same time, the standard canon of public address is not neutral. Some groups of speakers are notoriously under-represented, and some topics are treated as taboo.[12]

Elaborating on this point, Medhurst writes, "Historical revisionism is an important trend precisely because it does make our scholarship significant. We are able to teach something to the scholarly world at large and that teaching function, as Edwin Black noted in 1965, is no small part of public address scholarship."[13] In sum, the study of historical rhetoric is vital to our understanding of society and our place in it, to rhetorical theory, and to the politics of canonization and collective memory.

The bias toward recent texts is not the only factor that contributes to the intellectual stagnancy of RC. By rewarding shocking

and obscure discourses to the exclusion of more mainstream discourses, the forensic community nurtures the dangerous impression that popular rhetoric is less intrinsically important and interesting. At present, students seem compelled to analyze only those discourses that sound outrageous. Thus, most RCs tend to focus on the rhetorical efforts of fringe groups, such as Act-Up, Deaf Culture, and the Branch Davidians. Obviously, such studies are important and have contributed significantly to our understanding of rhetorical resistance and opposition. But alone, such studies treat only small segments of how power operates rhetorically in society. Therefore, coaches and judges should encourage students to explore dominant and popular discourses in addition to subordinate and fringe discourses. Only then will we come to understand how power is constructed and exercised in all parts of society.

Form and Structure

"Method," as practiced by the forensic community, refers to a collection of principles gleaned from a rhetorical critic's recent analysis of a particular discourse. Not only does this definition differ from the way most practicing critics conceptualize method, but it virtually guarantees that student critics will produce so-called "cookie-cutter" criticisms that prevent them from learning about their artifact or how rhetoric functions in society. Method in a scholarly sense is more general than the narrow conception held within forensics; rather, it is an orderly procedure or process of investigation, or as Kathleen German wrote in this journal in 1985, "broad categories or systems of critical thought... developed in response to the questions asked by critics."[14]

Modern textbooks on rhetorical criticism survey several methods. These methods are unified, not by a set of narrow rhetorical tenets, but by a general outlook. In *Rhetoric and Popular Culture,* for instance, Brummett identifies five key methods: marxist, feminist and psychoanalytic, dramatistic/narrative, media-centered, and culture-centered.[15] Brock, Scott, and Chesebro's *Methods of Rhetorical*

Criticism is organized around the methods of fantasy-theme, neo-Aristotelianism, dramatistic, narrative, generic, feminist, and deconstructionist.[16] Similarly, Foss's *Rhetorical Criticism* covers cluster, neo-Aristotelianism, fantasy-theme, feminist, generic, ideological, narrative, and pentadic.[17] Finally, Burgchardt's comprehensive *Readings in Rhetorical Criticism* adds social movement, ethical, metaphoric, and close-textual to those previously listed.[18] All of these methods exist, not as a narrow set of controlling terms, but as a general perspective on discourse. Genre criticism generally examines the shared expectations created by classes of texts; feminist criticism generally determines how texts foster gender inequalities; narrative criticism generally treats the suasory power of stories, and so forth.

This scholarly view of method has two important consequences. First, each method can produce an infinitude of distinct, yet valuable analyses. A feminist criticism of a text, for instance, might look at repressed desire, or phallic representations, or sexist language, for there is no single, prescribed way to do feminist criticism. Second, any number of methods could be brought to bear on a single text, each yielding its own valuable insights. A speech by Malcolm X, for instance, could be analyzed from a dramatistic perspective, or ideological perspective, or metaphoric perspective. Because any text can profitably be analyzed from countless different perspectives, method justification as practiced by the forensic community is problematic. Current practice perpetuates the mistaken assumption that one method is inherently better than others for reading a text. One method is not *more* appropriate than others, it is *as* appropriate. Students should select the method they do because they are interested in the types of questions-dramatistic, ideological, metaphoric-it asks, not because of some fabricated link between text and method. If student critics feel compelled to offer a justification, they should identify the initial questions they were interested in, and explain how their method aids them in answering those questions.

The important point here is that what passes as method in forensics is simply one critic's analysis of a particular instance of

discourse. Although scholarly critics use methods, such as the ideological perspective, their analyses are themselves not methods. In *Rhetorical Criticism,* Foss published three examples by different authors of ideological criticism. Although the essays are united by their interest in the ideological character of texts, i.e., they share the same method, each analysis and essay is distinctly different. Each author identifies certain principles at work in the examined discourse, but those principles are *not* a method. They are the scholar's critical observations, and when a student uses those observations as a method, the student critic is, in effect, pirating someone else's critical observations concerning a specific rhetorical artifact and forcing those observations to account for another instance of discourse.

Aside from the questionable way the forensic community defines method, its definition leads to unimaginative and unenlightening criticism. To understand why, we must turn our attention to the second main point of competitive RC and the early development of the field of speech criticism. After students successfully reduce a critic's analysis to a set of key principles in the first main point, they then apply those principles to examine their own artifact. In short, they engage in method driven criticism-where "method" retains the narrow meaning discussed earlier. Fifty years ago, scholarly critics were locked into a strikingly similar model. Many critics of that period practiced a brand of neo-Aristotelian criticism in which, as Dilip Gaonkar notes, "method mastered the object [or text]."[19] The danger of this approach was not with neo-Aristotelianism, but with how it was practiced. Recalls Zarefsky,

> Critics presumed a method-neo-Aristotelianism, not as Aristotle himself probably would have done it but as a set of categories automatically applied to any speaker or speech. The resulting studies were not theoretically interesting and often had as their primary finding that the neo-Aristotelian categories could be made to fit virtually anything.[20]

Within this framework, critics simply followed "a set of procedural injunctions on how to conduct oratorical criticism."[21] The pitfalls of this approach have long been widely recognized by speech scholars, for as Benson explains, "When criticism was so stringently subordinated to theory [i.e., method-driven], the theory itself was incapable of being tested or refined by the criticism: it could only be confirmed to nobody's surprise or enlightenment."[22]

Given these limitations, it is hardly surprising that the field would begin to explore alternative ways of doing criticism. In the 1960s, communication scholars began-due in part to Black's scathing attack of neo-Aristotelianism in 1965-to develop new methods of criticism. Almost over night, the field witnessed a proliferation of new methods from Fisher's narrative analysis to Bormann's fantasy-theme approach. Methodological pluralism failed to address the underlying problem, however, and criticism continued to be method-centered. Instead of producing cookie-cutter criticisms using one method, such as neo-Aristotelianism, critics generated cookie-cutter criticisms using many methods. Recognizing that cookie-cutter criticism persisted despite the introduction of new methods, the field came to understand that the *real* problem had to do with the narrow conception of method.[23] Zarefsky describes the transition from method-driven criticism to a more object oriented approach that took place in the years following this recognition:

> Throughout the academy, and particularly in the human sciences, the late 1960s and 1970s were marked by a self-reflexiveness about method and assumptions which called into question traditional models and paradigms . . . . As scholars realized that rigidity as to . . . perspective, and method of study were constricting inquiry and producing studies that largely replicated the assumptions, they began to probe in new directions . . . . The resulting studies, now accumulating over a decade or more, make more substantial theoretical

> contributions, exhibit a richer array of approaches, demonstrate more methodological sophistication and awareness of assumptions, and-at least in my opinion-are more interesting.[24]

Tragically, what Gaonkar has termed, "the arrival of the object," the turn from method to artifact that freed the field of speech communication from reductionists criticism, has not yet been embraced by the forensic community.

Competitive RC is still caught in the 1960s model of methodological pluralism. Although student criticisms are characterized by a wide variety of theories, the overall approach to RC continues to entail a narrow and reductionistic conception of method and to be animated by method. In forcing a narrow set of principles gleaned from a specific rhetorical analysis to account for the rhetoric they are analyzing, student critics tend to fall into one of two traps. On the one hand, many students mangle a critic's controlling principles until they fit the discourse they are analyzing. Some students, on the other hand, disfigure a discourse until it fits the controlling principles found in a published rhetorical analysis. Hence, students shred their artifact by ignoring language that does do not fit the method and by quoting textual fragments out of context to create a perfect correspondence between text and method. Competitive rhetorical criticisms tend to lack any real explanatory power because they force the practice to fit the theory, or the theory to fit the practice.

The third main point of most competitive RCs examine social and methodological implications of the analysis. The discussion of these implications tends to focus on rhetorical effectiveness. Although nothing is inherently wrong with such an approach, some potential dangers are present. First, discussions of effects can frequently oversimplify complex cause-effect relationships that may obscure the many rhetorical forces at work in a given situation. Second, the focus on effects frequently prevents students from asking more important and interesting questions. Increasingly, scholarly critics ask, "How does rhetoric work

in a particular instance?" as opposed to "Was rhetoric successful in a particular instance?" In fact, in some instances the question of effect is almost nonsensical. In *Rhetorical Criticism,* Black questions whether it would be possible for a critic to judge the effectiveness of John Jay Chapman's 1912 Coatesville Address to an audience of three persons; nevertheless, Black contends it is still profitable to engage that text, and he conducts a virtuoso reading that eloquently illustrates the value of criticism that is unconcerned with effect.[25]

The second traditional component of the implications section or the assessment of the method suffers from its own set of problems. Because the current RC model features a narrowly defined view of method, subsequent critiques of the method are wholly predictable. Students generally begin by pointing out some limitation of the method-some way in which it fails to account fully for their artifact. Since the method was originally written as an analysis of some other specific instance of discourse, it should come as no surprise that it cannot account for the student's artifact! In short, students use the method to explain rhetorical tactics and strategies that it was never designed to explain. Another common practice involves students' proposals to extend the method in their third main point. These so-called methodological extensions are a product of the necessary lack of fit between the method and the artifact. What students, coaches, and judges fail to understand is that the essays written by practicing critics and published in communication journals are not methods, they are individual rhetorical criticisms. Instead of appropriating someone else's analysis and calling it a method, students should produce their own readings of texts much the same way practicing critics do when they write an essay.

FROM METHOD TO TEXT

If the event of rhetorical criticism is to heighten its pedagogical value, then the forensic community should consider several viable alternatives to the current modus operandi.   Criticism is a practice

heavily influenced by the inventional process, and coaches should encourage students to see their selection of topics as an important part of criticism itself.[26] The artifacts students choose, as well as the way they define those artifacts, should inform the approach students take, and the types of questions they ask their analyses to address. Students should be encouraged to select topics that interest them; potential topics should include historical artifacts as well as contemporary artifacts, mainstream artifacts as well as marginal and/or obscure artifacts. Students might, for instance, explore the discourse of former presidents, early civil rights rhetoric, or the discourse of the women's movement in the nineteenth century. They might examine popular television series, musical artists, and cultural practices such as tattooing and quilting. These topics are as important as recent and marginal texts, for they can teach students about history, culture, and how communication functions in society and how it changes over time. For this solution to be successfully implemented, however, judges must stop penalizing students who examine historical and popular texts.

In writing their speeches, students should not limit themselves to a single structural model, and under no circumstances should they continue to use the present model that currently dominates the event of rhetorical criticism. Students should abandon the outdated, narrow, and misleading definition of method currently popular in the forensic community, and allow their artifacts, rather than their methods, to animate or drive their analyses. Black issues the same imperative to practicing critics when he writes, "[S]ometimes-maybe even all the time-a subject deserves to supersede a method, and to receive its own forms of disclosure."[27] Echoing this sentiment, Benson contends, "At its best, criticism is driven by a fascination with the particular [artifact or text], though it struggles to articulate the particularity of a given case in terms of larger concerns-interpretive, historical, technical, theoretical, and philosophical."[28] Commenting on the benefits of object-centered criticism, Leff explains, "Theory is something that arises from an understanding of the particular, and abstract principles become important only as they are instantiated and individuated within the

texture of actual discourse."[29]

Although Black, Benson, and Leff might broadly be characterized as close-textual critics, the turn from method to text is not limited to the close-textual approach. In 1990, the *Western Journal of Speech Communication* published a special issue on the current state of rhetorical criticism. The journal's editors invited two of the field's leading critics to share their views on criticism, and then commissioned Dilip Gaonkar to comment of both perspectives. Michael Leff and Michael McGee were selected because they represent two popular, though different, ways of conducting criticism at the present time: close-textual and ideological. But as Goankar explains, the perspectives articulated by Leff and McGee share a fascination with the text:

> The essays by Michael Leff and Michael McGee in this volume, ostensibly as illustrations of two competing approaches to rhetorical criticism, display greater anxiety about the critical object than about critical method. This is somewhat perplexing, because the names of Leff and McGee are associated with two different ways of conducting practical criticism: textual and ideological. In this special issue devoted to the interplay of those two methods, we find their chief proponents less concerned with rearticulating their methodological commitments and strategies than with totalizing the critical object... I regard this unexpected anxiety about the object as significant and deserving of analysis. It could hardly be a simple coincidence that two of our leading critics, known for their grasp of disciplinary concerns, should both elect on this occasion to problematize the character of the critical object.[30]

Gaonkar subsequently examines how both critics have made the object, rather than the method, the key feature in their criticism. Where the two

differ then is in how they conceptualize texts; Leff approaches the text as an artistic whole or unified field of action, while McGee approaches the text as fragmentary and as a constitutive process. Both perspectives, however, suggest the dangers of method-driven criticism.

CONCLUSION

How, then, should students approach criticism, and how should they structure their critical analyses? As there is no single correct answer to this question, students would be wise to follow the lead of practicing critics. After settling on a text or artifact, students need to give some thought to how they conceptualize their text. Is it discrete-clearly bounded in time and space-or diffuse-intricately tied to a host of other texts? Is it reactive, does the text respond to a particular context, or proactive, does the text create its own context? Should one read the text in its original context or a new one? These questions represent choices that critics make, and they guide the critical process. If a critic conceptualizes the text as especially reactive, it would be hard to say anything meaningful about the text without a sustained discussion of context. In this case, students might provide a contextual or historical overview, conduct a close reading of the text, and suggest some textual and historical insights. Zarefsky identifies the approach's value:

> Now, not all history is critical; not all criticism is historical. Granted. But any instance of public address consists of a text... and hence is susceptible to critical examination. And any instance of public address occurs in some context and hence is susceptible to historical study. The emphasis between text and context will vary from one study to the next, but I find it hard to imagine a decent study of public address which does not partake of both.[31]

But this is not, and should not be, the only way of doing criticism.

Ideological critics, such as McGee, tend to be interested in questions of power. Therefore, their analyses frequently focus on the ways that texts work to empower or disempower various individuals or groups in society. Adopting this approach, students might analyze the preferred meanings of the text around an issue such as gender, race, or sexuality, discuss the implications of that analysis for relationships of power, and judge the text democratic or undemocratic, oppressive or resistive, or some combination of these extremes.

A third approach students might take is to identify several salient rhetorical principles at work in the text, discuss what those principles are working to do, and assess the appropriateness of those principles for the rhetorical end. With regard to this third structural model, students should identify the salient rhetorical principles in the text by analyzing the text itself. They should not appropriate the principles identified by a practicing critic and published in an essay and then simply look for those same principles in their own text, for such an approach to criticism has questionable educational value and reflects a model that scholarly critics abandoned in favor of more productive approaches forty years ago. Nor should students limit themselves to the three alternative structural models just outlined. These models simply represent a few of the ways of doing criticism that shift the focus from method to text.

The forensic community may resist the suggestions offered here because judges are content or more comfortable with the current model, or students fear that they will be penalized in competition, or coaches simply believe that students are incapable of conducting their own criticism. A judge's apathy is a poor justification for maintaining the forensic status quo. Student competitors should be rewarded for doing scholarly rhetorical criticism rather than conventional forensic practice. Indeed when taught how to do rhetorical criticism, students can produce their own readings of texts-readings that are far more insightful than method-driven, cookie-cutter criticisms. Unfortunately, the longer the forensic community clings to the current way of doing RC, the wider the gap between scholarly theory and forensic practice will grow.

ENDNOTES

1. Don F. Faules, "The Development of Forensic Activities," *Directing Forensics: Debate and Contest Speaking,* ed. Don F. Faules and Richard D. Rieke (Scranton, PA: International Textbook Company, 1968) 1. To avoid interrupting the continuity of this quotation, I have chosen not to mark the sexist language with [sic].

2. See Karl R. Wallace, ed., *History of Speech Education in America: Background Studies* (New York: Apple-Century-Crofts, 1954); Herman Cohen, *The History of Speech Communication: The Emergence of a Discipline, 1914-1945* (Annandale, VA: Speech Communication Association, 1994); Faules 1-32.

3. Contest rhetorical criticism's disconnected evolution is especially unfortunate given the event's unique relationship to the discipline. In a special issue of this journal over a decade ago, guest editor William Benoit observed that while all individual events have ties to the discipline of communication, rhetorical criticism "serves to tie competitive forensics into the discipline in ways possible for no other event." William Benoit, ed., *National Forensic Journal* 3:2 (1985): preface.

4. Some coaches and judges maintain a distinction between rhetorical criticism and communication analysis by arguing that "communication" is a broader term than "rhetoric" and allows for the analysis of a wider range of artifacts. In 1970, The Wingspread Conference on Rhetoric concluded that "Rhetorical Studies are properly concerned with the process by which symbols and systems of symbols have influence upon beliefs, values, attitudes, and actions, and they embrace all forms of human communication, not exclusively public address nor communication within any one class or cultural group"-see Douglas Ehninger et. al., "Report of the Committee on the Scope of Rhetoric and the Place of Rhetorical Studies in Higher Education," *The Prospect of Rhetoric,* eds. Lloyd Bitzer and Edwin Black (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1971) 208. Practicing critics have, since Wingspread, generally viewed any form of suasory discourse (i.e., film, television, music, photographs, public address, pamphlets, cultural practices, etc.) as rhetorical.

5. The organizational structure of contest RC has achieved the status of doxa, or the undisputed and undiscussed, for it "goes without saying because it comes without saying." See Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice,* trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977) 167-9.

6. Kevin W. Dean, "Coaching Contest Rhetorical Criticism," *National Forensic Journal* 3:2 (1985): 123-4.

7. Dean 117.

8. Martin J. Medhurst, "Public Address and Significant Scholarship: Four Challenges to the Rhetorical Renaissance," *Texts in Context: Critical Dialogues on Significant Episodes in American Political Rhetoric,* eds. Michael Leff and Fred J. Kauffeld (Davis, CA: Hermagoras Press, 1989) 38.

9. Edwin Black, *Rhetorical Criticism: A Study of Method* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965) 67.

10. David Zarefeky, "The State of the Art in Public Address Scholarship," *Texts in Context: Critical Dialogues on Significant Episodes in American Political Rhetoric,* eds. Michael Leff and Fred J. Kauffeld (Davis, CA: Hermagoras Press, 1989) 26.

11. See John Schilb, "Future Historiographies of Rhetoric and the Present Age of Anxiety," *Writing Histories of Rhetoric,* ed. Victor J. Vitanza (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1994) 131.   See also Karen A. Foss and Sonja K. Foss, *Women Speak: The Eloquence of Women's Lives* (Prospect Heights: Waveland Press, 1991).

12. Zarefsky 25.

13. Medhurst 35.

14. Kathleen M. German, "Finding a Methodology for Rhetorical Criticism," *National Forensic Journal* 3:2 (1985): 91.

15. Barry Brummett, *Rhetoric in Popular Culture* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1994).

16. Bernard L. Brock, Robert L. Scott, and James W. Chesebro, *Methods of Rhetorical Criticism: A Twentieth-Century Perspective,* third edition, revised (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1989).

17. Sonja K. Foss, *Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration and Practice,* second edition (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1996).

18. Carl R. Burgchardt, *Readings in Rhetorical Criticism* (State College, PA: Strata Publishing, 1995).

19.   Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar, "Object and Method in Rhetorical Criticism: From Wichelns to Leff and McGee," *Western Journal of Communication* 54 (1990): 292. See also Dilip Gaonkar, "Epilogue The Oratorical Text: The Enigma of Arrival," *Texts in Context: Critical Dialogues on Significant Episodes in American Political Rhetoric,* eds. Michael Leff and Fred J. Kauffeld (Davis, CA: Hermagoras Press, 1989) 255-275.

20. Zarefsky l5.

21. Gaonkar, "Object and Method" 292.

22. Thomas W. Benson, "History, Criticism, and Theory in the Study of American Public Address," *American Rhetoric: Context and Criticism,* ed. Thomas Benson (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989) 7.

23. Sonja Foss, "Constituted by Agency: The Discourse and Practice of Rhetorical Criticism," *Speech Communication: Essays to Celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the Speech Communication Association,* eds. G. Phillips and J. Wood (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1990) 33-51.

24. Zarefsky l5.

25. Black, *Rhetorical Criticism* 78-90.

26. An excellent book on this subject is William L. Nothstine, Carole Blair, and Gary Copeland, *Critical Questions: Invention, Creativity, and the Criticism of Discourse and Media* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994).

27. Edwin Black, "Gettsyburg and Silence," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 80 (1994): 22.

28. Benson xii.

29. Michael Leff, "Textual Criticism: The Legacy of G.P. Mohrmann," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 72 (1986): 382.

30. Gaonkar, "Object and Method" 290.

31. Zarefsky 23-4.

My Four Years As Editor

Halford Ryan

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When I assumed the editorship of the *National Forensic Journal* in 1995, the journal had not been published since volume 10, number 2, Fall, 1992, although a volume 11, number 2, Winter, 1994, somehow appeared out of nowhere. Naturally, the state of the journal was enervated, and I had the modest goal of once again returning the journal to some semblance of an orderly schedule of publication.

This goal could not have been accomplished without the considerable help of the members of the editorial board. I thank them for their help service and assistance, and the association owes them a debt of gratitude for their professionalism. Contributors to this journal know, and the membership should realize, that the readers turned around the essays in a timely fashion that would make other journals jealous.

Happily, a backlog of articles had apparently accrued in the absence of the journal's being published, for the editor and readers received numerous essays during the first two years of 1996-97. Volumes 14 and 15 published eighteen refereed articles and three book reviews. Then, essays ceased to be submitted in 1998-99, except for those in this issue. The present issue should really be volume 16, number 1, Spring, 1998, but it is combined with a non-existent number 2, Fall, 1998, in order to catch-up a belated schedule. The present volume is late because I did not have enough essays until now to publish an issue. The 1999 issues, if any appear, will be considerably late, and under a new editor.

Readers of this journal may be interested to learn how the editor selected articles. I sent them to three critics. The readers checked one of three categories: accept, accept with revisions, or reject. Almost none of the essays were accepted as they were originally presented, and very few submissions were rejected outright. Most of the articles were accepted on a 2-1 vote, but almost all of the rejections were based on a

3-0 vote. The editor on two occasions accepted essays that were not reviewed, but in the editor's opinion merited publication. Thus, potential contributors faced a favorable prospect in having their essays accepted for publication, and all book reviews were published.

The forensic community should know that the editorial board-especially several members who were strongly interested in raising the level of style and diction in the journal-and the editor encountered many essays that were not satisfactorily composed. This fact exacerbated the readers' and editor's work, for many professionals in forensics do not write well. The flagrant faults that the readers and I found over the years were legion. Numerous contributors, almost all of whom held Ph.D. degrees, routinely made egregious errors in English composition. These mistakes included a lack of agreement in singular/plural nouns with singular/plural verbs; needless and numerous changes in tenses between past and present verbs; nouns used as adjectives and nouns used as verbs; and all kinds of violence to the English sentence-incomplete sentences without a subject or a verb, dangling participles, the misuse of commas and semicolons; and so-called sentences that defied description.

Editorial preferences are not necessarily a contributor's error, but the following habits are not generally conceived as an appropriate scholarly style: a compulsion to begin many sentences with "There," such as "There is no reason to begin a sentence with there"; passive verb constructions that enervate a writer's style; inflated previews of points to be made and summaries of points just made; and the use of contractions, such as "One shouldn't use contractions in scholarly writing." Although the following convention is not universally accepted, the noun is "forensics" and the adjective is "forensic."

The National Forensic Association paid for the printing and mailing of the journal, and Washington and Lee University supplied the incidental postage for mailing out copies for review and for returning the edited essays to the authors whose work was accepted.

Readers and contributors should be aware of the editor's work in preparing the journal for the printers. The preparation from disk to

camera-ready format is tedious and time consuming. The camera-ready pages have to be formatted for photographic reproduction. Since I had no secretarial help of any kind, *I* had to remove all superfluous commands, change underlining to italics, adjust the margins, change the fonts, etc.

A basic fact of a journal's life is that the editor cannot publish essays that are not submitted. The paucity of scholarly forensic articles, particularly at a time when one hears laments about the circumstances of coaches and directors of forensics with regard to promotion and tenure, is troubling. Scholarly writing has always been a requisite for respect in academia. Folks in forensics cannot expect their non-forensic colleagues to take them seriously if they do not take themselves seriously enough to publish.