Assessing the Range: A Comparative Analysis of A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. and N.F.A. Rating Points

Trischa Goodnow, Oregon State University
Gordon S. Carlson, Oregon State University

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Abstract

This study examines the results of the American Forensics Association National Individual Events Tournament and the National Forensics Association National Championship Tournament from 2004 to 2006 to determine the range of rating points awarded by judges at the respective tournaments. The results reveal that judges at the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. use a smaller range of the 1-25 point scale than do judges at the N.F.A. tournament who use a 70 to 100 point scale. The results of this study provide the framework for future research into the important practice of awarding rating points.

Key Words:

Rating Points
National Tournaments
Point Distributions
Judges

Assessing the Range

A Comparative Analysis of A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. and N.F.A. Rating Points

A common discussion among coaches and the national committee at the American Forensics Association Championship Tournament is whether rating points should be eliminated from ballots.[1] The rationale offered were varied, ranging from the idea that rating points were arbitrary to the idea that only a small range was used and so did not differentiate competitors enough to be meaningful. While the first rationale is difficult to test, the second is easily assessed. Further, the question arises whether these same questions are consistent with the practices of the National Forensics Association National Tournament.

[1] One author, Goodnow, was on the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. national committee for ten years where this topic was brought before the committee at least two times. Further, this same author had numerous discussions at the tournament on this topic.

The American Forensics Association National Individual Events Tournament and the National Forensics Association Championship Tournament evaluate students' performances in rounds with both rankings and ratings. Both tournaments rank students 1-5 in preliminary rounds (with any speakers beyond 5th being tied for 5th) and rank students through the appropriate place (1-6 or 7) in elimination rounds. Differences occur, however, in the ratings systems that the two tournaments use. The A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. requires judges to rate students using a 1 to 25 point scale with 25 being the highest points and 1 being the lowest. The N.F.A. tournament demands judges rate students using a 70 to 100 point scale with 100 being the highest and 70 being the lowest points possible. Though each uses an arbitrary range, functionally one uses a 25 point scale the other uses a 31 point scale. The question arises, Are the points distributed equally in both scales? In other words, do judges award points in the same approximate distribution in each scale?

This essay seeks to answer these and similar questions. Specifically, this study is guided by the following research questions and hypotheses:

RQ 1: Are points distributed with equal or similar values during both tournaments?

H1: The points will be distributed differently for each tournament.

RQ 2: Do ratings correlate to the rankings with consistent distributions for each tournament?

H2: Ratings will not be correlated to the rankings with consistent distribution for each tournament.

The results of the analysis of these distributions and correlations will reveal if judges use the two national tournament scales in the same way. If the distribution of rating points is consistent between the two tournaments, then it can be concluded that judges likely perceive the scales in similar ways and the numbers used are irrelevant to how rating points are assigned. If the distribution of rating points is not consistent between the two tournaments, then it can be concluded that the numbers used may influence how rating points are assigned at the two tournaments.

This study is the first in a two-part analysis of rating points. It must first be established that there are, indeed, differences in the way that rating points are distributed at the two tournaments. Lacking this evidence further investigation would be fruitless. However, the results of this study do point to significant differences between point distributions. Consequently, a second study was conducted to determine the perceptions of judges as they awarded those points. Those results are reported in a separate study.

Literature Review

Research into the mechanics of individual events has focused on a variety of areas; among these are the philosophy grounding the various events (Rossi & Goodnow, 2006; Preston, 1991; Hindman, 1997), the method of advancing finalists (Littlefield, 1987; Hanson, 1987), differences between men

and women in different events (Manchester & Friedley, 2003; Greenstreet, Joeckel, Martin & Piercy, 1998), and judges' ballots (Cronn-Mills & Croucher, 2001; Klosa & Dubois, 2001). While rankings have received considerable attention (Weiss, 1984; Kay & Aden, 1984; and Sharp & Montanaro, 1988), ratings have been ignored. Weiss (1984) does suggest that his study will examine how rankings can be added into the computational equation for determining results. However, the article only mentions rankings without giving them a deciding factor in the computational schema he examines. Though rating points play a deciding role in tournament outcomes, rating points have been overlooked in the literature.

Method

Results of the 2004, 2005, and 2006 A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. and N.F.A. National Championships were gathered from the tournament staff of both tournaments. The authors were able to obtain copies of the actual spreadsheets used to compute the results of the tournaments.[2] Each event for each year was then sorted, per their respective tournaments, in an Excel spreadsheet to group all first place ranks and rates through fifth place ranks and rates (to sixth or seventh in elimination rounds). Preliminary rounds were sorted separately from elimination rounds.

For the data of this study, 25,723 (n=25,723) scores were examined from the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. tournament and 33,518 (n=31,538) scores were examined from the N.F.A. tournament. The A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. regularly uses approximately 150 judges and the N.F.A. generally uses approximately 120.[3] The authors did not assess how many individual competitors this represented. The disparity in the number of overall scores evaluated results from two factors. First, the qualification procedures for the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. and N.F.A. tournaments are different. The A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. tournament requires a competitor to qualify by placing at three different tournaments in a specific event with final placing equal to or less than eight or nine (this number changed in 2006 from nine to eight). The number of competitors in an event determines which places will provide a qualifying leg to the national tournament. N.F.A. requires that a competitor place in one final round in a qualifying event. All finalists qualify if there are at least 12 competitors in an event. If there are less than 12 competitors, one half of the participants in an event will qualify. Consequently, the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. is more difficult to qualify for resulting in fewer competitors. A second reason for the disparity is the number of events. The A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. has eleven events while the N.F.A. tournament had nine

[2] The results for each tournament are complete except for the Dramatic Duo results from both A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. (2004) and N.F.A. (2005). These results were difficult to send via email and, were, thus discounted in the research since the event was missing from both tournaments during one year.

[3] Specific judges were counted at the 2006 tournaments and tournament staff confirmed that these numbers were consistent with other years.

for the national tournaments included in the study to date (N.F.A. now has 10). However, the N.F.A.'s qualification procedure permits more flexibility in allowing non-standard events to qualify for events at the national competition. For example, Impromptu Sales would qualify for Impromptu at the N.F.A. tournament but would not at the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T.

Rating points were then converted to a common scale for the purpose of mathematical comparison. A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. rating points were multiplied by 1.24 to create a 31-point scale. N.F.A. points were converted by subtracting 69 from each rating point. Hence, each point awarded could be evaluated on a 31-point scale from 1-31. Though this conversion does somewhat distort the original scales, the conversion does allow for an easier comparison of the two ratings methods. This was important to allow conclusions to be drawn from the analysis.

Rating points were then analyzed to determine the frequency of each point value from each tournament both in general and for specific events and rankings.

Results

RQ1: An examination of the general trends in the point distributions of the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. and N.F.A. tournaments reveals that judges award points differently at the two tournaments. In preliminary rounds, the range of points awarded at the N.I.E.T. is approximately a 21-point range on the converted 31-point scale. All but eight ratings fall between 31 and 9.92 inclusively [figure 1]. The remaining eight points represent a mere 0.03% of the 25,723 total ratings. Assuming that the data conforms, at least in general, to a normal statistical distribution (an assumption supported by the bell curve created when graphing the data as discussed later in this section [figure 1]), nearly all the ratings of 9.92 or lower fall outside of the statistically significant region of data for A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. scores. Considering that 25,723 ratings were recorded within the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. data set, the eight scores below 9.92 can as easily be attributed to error in rating or eccentricities of the event rather than reasoned judgments.

The N.F.A. scores seem to reveal that judges do use the entire 31 point range at their disposal [figure 2]. Of the 33,518 total ratings in the data set, 599 are below a nine. This compared to the mere eight ratings in the comparable range within the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. data set. Even taking into account the larger number of ratings in the N.F.A. data set, this still represents 1.78% of the total number of ratings at N.F.A. In fact, there were 97 ratings (0.29% of the data set) of 1 given at the N.F.A. tournaments of the last three years compared to the grand total of four ratings (0.016% of the data set) of 1 given at the last three A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. tournaments. The numbers culled from each data set clearly indicate a conscious use of the lower fourth of the scoring range at N.F.A. tournaments while judges at A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. tournaments are choosing not to use the lower fourth of the scoring range. Possible reasons and implications are discussed later.

Further examination of the general trends of both tournaments produces potentially revealing observations. Perhaps most telling are the notably common ratings at the two competitions. The number of total preliminary rankings spikes at 24.8 (20 on the original scale) with 14% of the total rankings awarded at the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. tournament. However, at N.F.A., ratings spike at 21 (90), 16 (85), 11 (80), 6 (75) and again at 1 (70). It is notable that at N.F.A. points spike at the rounded numbers of 90, 85, 80, 75, and 70 while the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. spikes at 20. These spikes can be observed in figures 1 and 2 and deviate from an otherwise predictable bell curve. Interestingly, there is a small spike (5 rates awarded) in the 2004 results at 7 (76) while the 2006 results show 6 rates at the 6-point mark. Further investigation of these spikes is warranted.

The results of this analysis illustrate that Hypothesis 1 is confirmed. The implications of these results imply that further investigation is necessary to uncover why a limited range of points is awarded at the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. and why certain point values are more frequently awarded at N.F.A.

RQ 2: When the ratings points were analyzed in conjunction with the ranks awarded Hypothesis 2 was also confirmed. At both A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. and N.F.A. tournaments the ratings point range for a given rank was smaller for first place and expanded as lower ranks were awarded. While this pattern was consistent across events within a tournament, the ranges at A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. were not consistent with the ranges at N.F.A.

At the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T., at least one rating of 31 was awarded for every rank (1-5) with the exception of the 2005 A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. where no 31 was awarded to the 5th place rank. The range of points awarded to first place reaches from 31 to 19.84 (25-16 on the original scale). Second place ranges from 31 to 18.6 points (25-15) while third place ranges from 31 to 17.36 (25-14). Finally, fourth place ranges from 31 to 13.64 (25-11) and fifth place ranges from 31 to 13.64 (25-11). [Figure 3] There were a few ratings below 11 awarded to fifth place which we consider anomalies as discussed in our treatment of the first research question. Consequently, fifth place exhibited the greatest range of awarded points.

The N.F.A. tournament illustrated different results, with 31 points only being awarded to the first and second ranks with the highest number of points getting successively lower with each lowered rank. First place ratings range from 31 to 13 (100 to 81). Though second place ranges from 31 to 11 (100 to 79), in 2006 no 31's were awarded. The range for third place extends from 30 to 7 (98 to 75). Fourth place ranges from 29 to 1 (97 to 70) while fifth place ranges from 28 to 1 (96 to 70). [Figure 4] There were no perfect ratings awarded to fifth place ranks at N.F.A. as there were at A.F.A.-N.I.E.T.

While the hypothesis is confirmed, it is not surprising that the point values are different for the two tournaments based on the results of Research Question 1. These results do, however, lead to some speculation.

Discussion

It is clear from this analysis that rating points are awarded differently at the two tournaments. The effective A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. rating range is significantly reduced compared to the N.F.A. rating range. This leads to several observations and questions. First, the N.F.A. scale is five points larger than A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. scale, but can this account for the difference in the way that points are awarded? It is possible that there is a significantly different judge pool at the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. than at N.F.A. Further, it could be possible that there are a handful of judges that consistently use the lower ranges at N.F.A. that skew the whole results. However, there are several hundred scores at the bottom of the N.F.A. range that are not used in the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. range. It would take either many judges or a few judges using almost exclusively the bottom of the range to account for this scoring discrepancy. Considering the distribution of rates per rank discussed earlier and the skewing of the data towards higher scores (each tournament displays a bell curve but it is skewed towards the high end of the scale) this seems unlikely.

An additional factor that may help to explain the broader use of the N.F.A. scale is the tournament's historical use of rating points. In the first years of the tournament (the first tournament was held in 1971), there were automatic points awarded to first and last place in each round. First was automatically awarded 100 points and last was awarded a 70. This may have encouraged judges to use the full range. During the 2006 national championship, one of the authors questioned Dr. Seth Hawkins, the founder of N.F.A. and President from 1971-1977, about the practice, he noted that the automatic points were required to ensure that judges could not unfairly eliminate the first place rank from advancing and that the fifth place ranking would not receive inflated points. Neither Hawkins nor any other long time N.F.A. participant remembered when the practice was stopped. It is possible, however, that there are enough judges from the early years remaining in the pool who became accustomed to those practices. This is another possibility to be investigated.

The point spikes may indicate another reason why the points are different, especially since the spikes occur at round numbers. These numbers may be convenient markers for judges. Awarding an 80 may seem more reasonable than an 81. A second reason for the spikes may be that these points correspond to common grades on a 100-point grading scale. Since competitors are all students and most judges are members of, or related to, the Academy, there may be a sense of community standards and norms established for these point values based on classroom grading scales. Because the scale is from 70 to 100, it could be easy to rationalize the points as letter grades and use round numbers to give an A, B, or C and use 95, 85, and 75 to easily and evenly split groups of comparable competitors. This conjecture provides a rationale, in part, for the follow-up study "Assessing Self-Reports of Judge Ratings Distributions: An Analysis of Survey Results of A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. and N.F.A. Nationals Judges."

If judges at N.F.A. use the entire range, due in part to their use of a traditional academic grading scale, it may help explain why the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. tournament judges do not use the entire range at their disposal. While a judge who is used to grading student work on a traditional letter grade system is comfortable assigning a 70 to an average presentation (a C in letter grade form), that same person may feel uncomfortable assigning a value of one to the same presentation because a grade of one in the classroom would be notably poor. Judges may feel that giving a one is unfair or even cruel because it sounds like a much worse score compared to a 70 which, in the mind of an educator, is translated, consciously or unconsciously, to a letter grade of C. The data used in this work certainly cannot prove this conclusion; however, this suggestion is strong enough to merit further investigation into the phenomenon.

The point range that correlates to the ranks also leads to some speculation. First, it is curious that the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. awards ranks of fifth place the maximum amount of rate points. This has implications for possible breaks since the low rank and rate are eliminated for outround calculations. Consequently, one could receive a fifth place with very high points which may outweigh high ranks with lower points. This has been a consistent question with rating points; because of their arbitrary nature are they an appropriate basis for determining elimination round participants? This study cannot answer this question. However, the results of this study do suggest that further research is warranted.

Limitations

There were two limitations to this study. First, the absence of Dramatic Duo scores for one year (A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. is missing 2004, and N.F.A. is missing from 2005) from each tournament is unfortunate; however, the consistency of the scores for the other years of dramatic duo, as well as most other events, suggests that the inclusion of these scores would not substantially change the overall results. Moreover, the consistency of the overall scores from three years of results implies that judges award points relatively consistently at both tournaments, even from year to year.

The second limitation concerns the nature of the data. This study has suggested possible explanations for the differences in the rating points at the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. and N.F.A. Clearly, these suggestions are not provable from the data analyzed. However, this data combined with the speculations do direct further research and allow for a fruitful discussion within the forensics community. The data analyzed in this essay are the factual results of the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. and N.F.A. tournaments from three separate years of competition. This data clearly shows a marked difference between the ways that points are awarded *in practice*. For this data to be used in meaningful ways, a second, separate study is necessary to consider the question, "Why do judges award points in the ways that they do at the separate tournaments?" It is suggested here that a survey of judges at both tournaments ask about the

judges' standards and practices for awarding points. This may be the only way to assess why judges award points in the manner that they do. Such a survey has been administered to judges at the 2006 national competitions and the results of that survey are reported in a separate article.

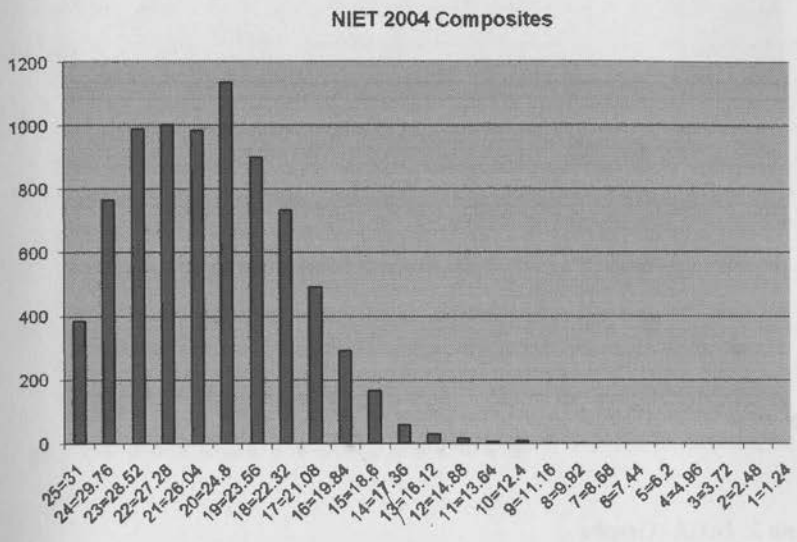
Conclusions

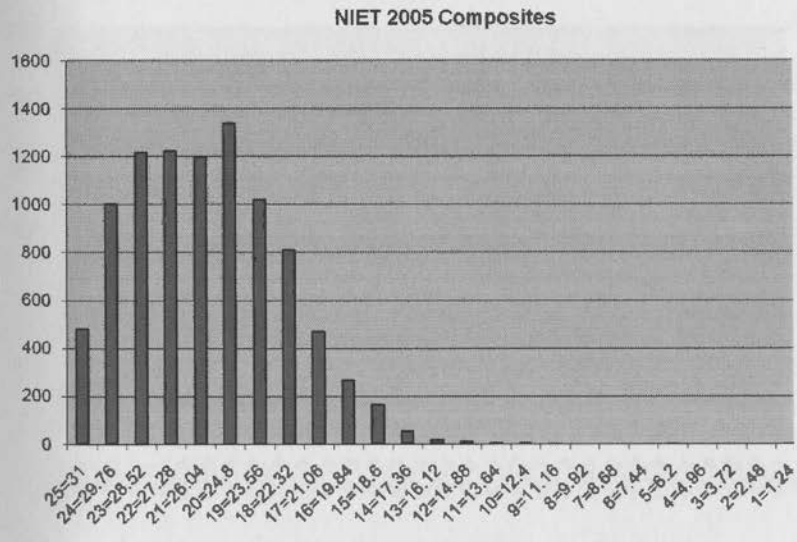
Ultimately, this research is important for both competitive and educational reasons. Competitively, this essay illustrates that presumptions that points are meaningless are somewhat supported at the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. because such a small range is used so as to virtually eliminate any distinction between quality of performances. Since a much broader range is used at the N.F.A., the relative quality of the competition is better measured. If Competitor A receives a 1-100 at N.F.A. and Competitor B receives a 2-90, one can conclude that the judge perceived Competitor A's performance to be far superior to Competitor B. Given the range of scores at the N.F.A. such a scenario is likely. However, at the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T., such differentiation, while possible, is unlikely. Consequently, the relative, perceived quality of the competition may be more easily judged at the N.F.A.

Educationally, for the competitor, a wider range of scales may have more meaning in terms of what the competitor needs to do to improve their performance. A score at N.F.A. in the low 80's may communicate to the student that they have much work to do. Conversely, a score in the upper teens at the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. may not send the same message. Student perceptions of rating points are also an area that warrants further research.

This study set out to determine if rating points are awarded differently at the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. and N.F.A. national tournaments. The results illustrate that points are awarded differently both in general and in relation to individual rankings. It has long been lamented at the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. that there is a limited portion of the scale used when rating performances. This study seems to show that complaint to be valid. The question that remains unanswered in this study is why? This study does, however, lay the foundation for further research that is taken up in the following essay. With the empirical data now well established, a dialogue within the community can begin in earnest and further research may be able to provide the elusive answer to why?

Figure 1: A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. Graphs





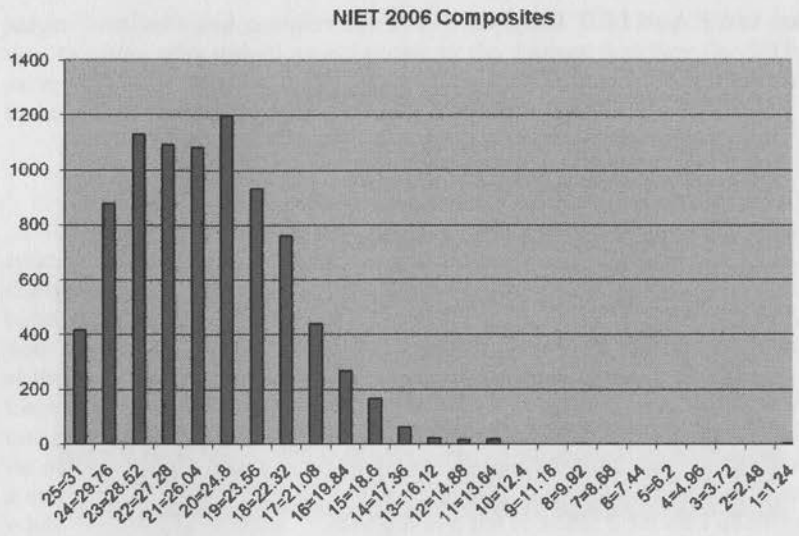
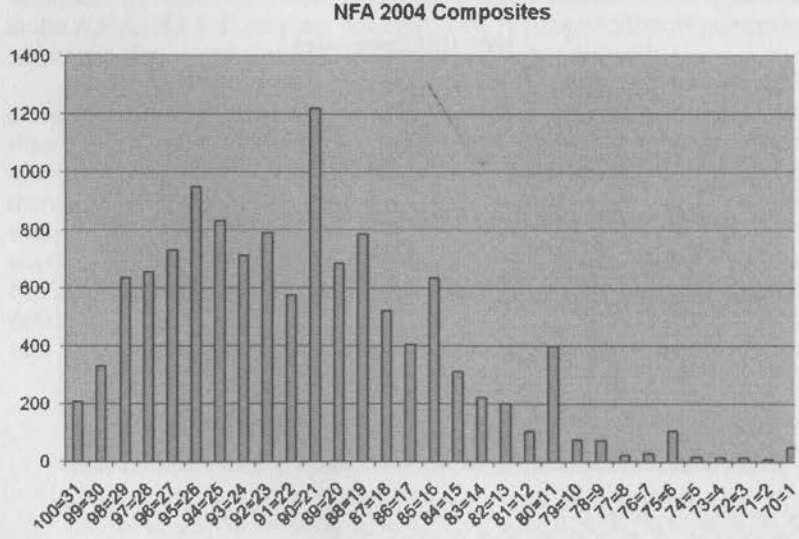
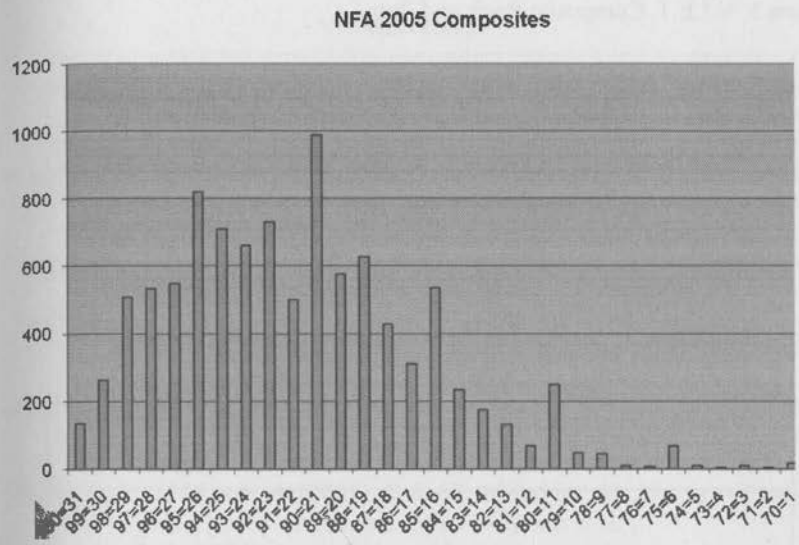


Figure 2: N.F.A. Graphs




NFA 2005 Composites
1200
1000
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600
400
200
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100=31
99=30
98=29
97=28
96=27
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93=24
92=23
91=22
90=21
89=20
88=19
87=18
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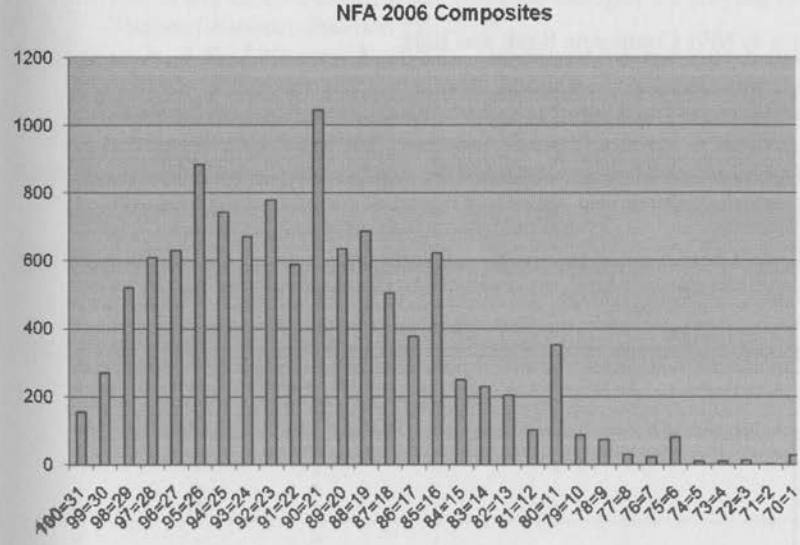
NFA 2006 Composites
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83=14
82=13
81=12
80=11
79=10
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72=3
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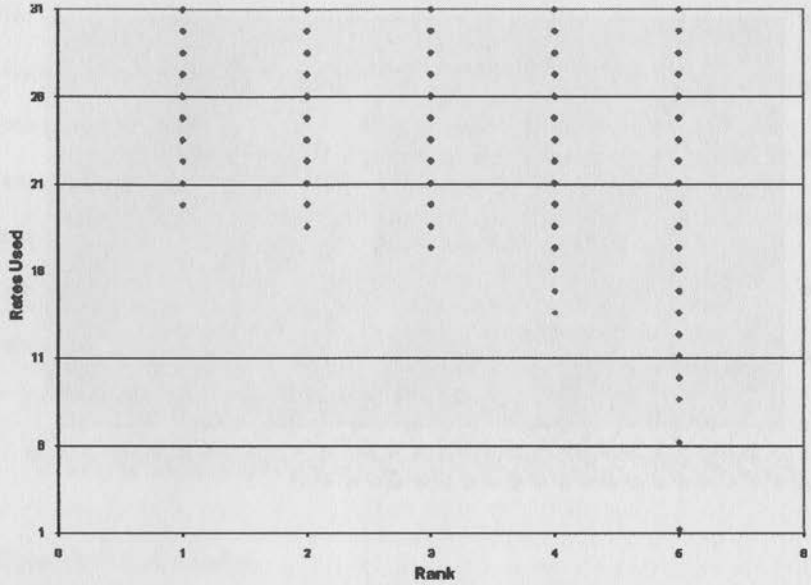
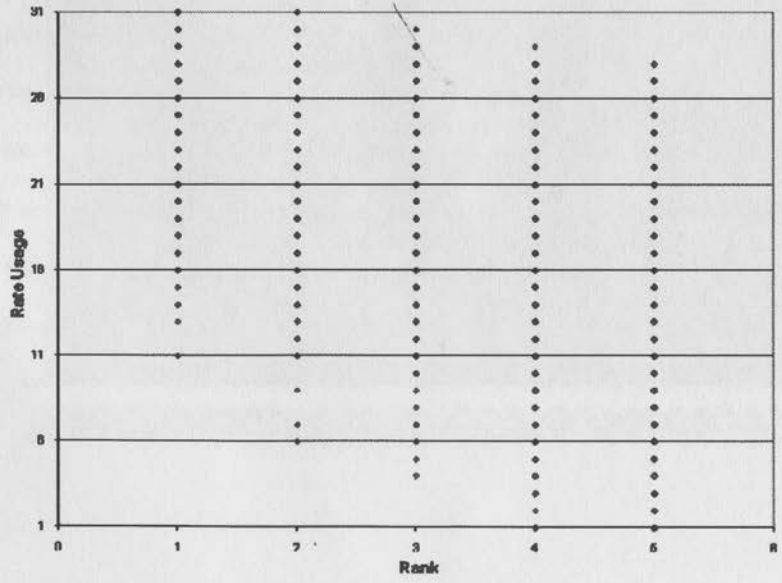
70=1

Figure 3: N.I.E.T. Composite Rank and Rate



Each point represents at least one rate at that number.

Figure 4: NFA Composite Rank and Rate



Each point represents at least one rate at that number.

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Assessing Self-Reports of Judge Ratings Distributions: An Analysis of Survey Results of A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. and N.F.A. Nationals Judges

Trischa Goodnow, Oregon State University

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to report the results of a survey administered to judges at the 2006 American Forensics Association National Individual Events Tournament and the National Forensics Association National Championships. The survey sought responses to judges' perceptions of and methods of awarding ratings points. The results revealed that while in general judges perceived points in similar ways, judges at the two tournaments viewed the lower ranges of the scales differently. A.F.A. judges awarded the lowest points for offensive material or behavior, breaking the rules, or not showing up, while N.F.A. judges cited some of these same reasons but also offered justification for low points based on the quality of the performance. This study then seeks to examine the implications of these results and avenues for future research.

Key Words:
Rating Points
Judges

Assessing Self-Reports of Judge Ratings Distributions

An Analysis of Survey Results of A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. and N.F.A. Nationals Judges

An analysis of rating point distributions at the American Forensics Association National Individual Events Tournament and the National Forensics Association National Championships reveals that judges award points differently at the two tournaments (Goodnow & Carlson, 2009). Judges at the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. award points on a 12 point scale in spite of the available 25 point range while judges at the N.F.A. tournament use the full 30 point scale available. The difference lies in the actual point values; for the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. judges use a 1-25 point scale while the N.F.A. uses a 70-100 point scale. Since judges obviously perceive the scales differently though only a 5-point difference is evident in the scales, the question arises how do judges decide to award points.

Previous studies of the method of computation of tournament outcomes show that researchers have focused mainly on ranks with little atten-

tion on rates (Hanson, 1987; Littlefield, 1987; Montanaro & Sharp, 1988; Weiss, 1984). In fact, though rating points plays an important role in both competitive and educational goals of forensics activity, to date there is no specific research on this evaluation tool. This study seeks to rectify this absence in the research. To these ends this study will explain the method, uncover the results and discuss the implications of this research. This study lays a foundation for tournament directors, educators, competitors and judges alike to consider the impact of rating points on the competitive and educational outcomes of forensics activities.

Method

This study consisted of a 20 question on-line survey administered to judges after the 2006 A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. and N.F.A. national tournaments (Appendix 1). A list of judges was culled from the registration sheets of both tournaments. The email address of the Director of Forensics or contact person was also copied at that time. An email was sent to the Director of Forensics or contact person asking for emails for any other judges that accompanied the team to nationals. In addition, the tournament hosts provided a list of hired judges and their email addresses that they had obtained for the tournaments. Within three days of each tournament an email was sent asking for participation in the survey and informing potential participants that their participation implied their consent to participate in the research. 150 judges were emailed following the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. with 75 responding, a 50% response rate. 118 judges were emailed following N.F.A. with 44 responding, a 37% response rate. At the end of the N.F.A. survey, participants were asked to answer three additional questions if they had also judged at the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. (Appendix 2). 10 respondents answered these questions.

The results of the survey were then analyzed using a grounded theory approach. Grounded theory was developed by sociologists to identify categories and concepts that emerge from a text and to link the concepts with substantive and formal theories (Bernard, 2002). Grounded theory requires the researcher to become "grounded" in the texts and to allow themes to emerge from the data. To do this, the researcher reads and rereads the data and codes by identifying words or phrases that emerge repeatedly in the texts. These words and phrases are grouped to form themes. The data is then reread to identify where themes are and are not present. From these themes, the researcher can then create a theory to explain the themes (Bernard, 2002). This data was analyzed using this method. The identified themes were found in sets of questions that dealt with similar types of subject matter. The different subject matter from the two different sets of questionnaires (A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. and N.F.A.) revealed different themes. From these themes several conclusions can be drawn.

Results

The survey is divided into three sections. The first section reports demographic data of respondents including sex, years coaching, years attending the tournament, years coaching, coaching position, and whether they taught in addition to coaching. The primary information gleaned from these responses can be found in Table 1.

The second section asks judges to comment on how they award points. A series of questions asked them to report the general range that they used and how they determined points. The A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. results revealed that judges were more likely to have a set range of points according to rank. Twenty-one judges reported having a set rate scale when awarding points. Seven judges suggested that their first place received a set rate and successive ranks were awarded points accordingly. Ten judges suggested that they had a small range for a given rank. So, for example one judge suggested that first place would receive a 23-25 depending on the perceived quality of the performance. Each rank thereafter would receive one to three points lower depending on the comparative quality. Judges self-reported that the range of points awarded was generally 14-25.

The N.F.A. results were less consistent in how judges awarded rating points. While eleven judges did report set point ranges, N.F.A. judges reported that they were likely to use the full 30-point scale. Consequently, the set point ranges tended to be larger. In addition, twelve judges reported that they had a range for the quality of the performance; a great performance would warrant a rating in the 90's while a mediocre performance would rate in the 80's. Poor performances would be awarded in the 70's. Three judges also stated that the rate was derived by comparing the performance to the ideal in the judge's head, while eight additional judges noted the quality of perfection being a standard. One final comment that was made seven times suggested that awarding points on this scale was equivalent to awarding grades. One judged suggested that it was easy "to determine what a 'C' speech was compared to an 'A' speech."

The question asking judges if there was a difference in the way they awarded points based on the genre (limited preparation, oral interpretation or public speaking) revealed few insights. Predictably, the majority of judges suggested that the rating was based on the requirements of the specific even; no respondent admitted awarding higher points to one genre or another. One judge did admit that they awarded lower points in events in which they competed. In general, there appears to be no difference in the way points are awarded among genres of events.

The second area of questions dealt with awarding the highest score possible and the lowest score possible. Questions asked what would make a performance earn a 25 or 100 and a 1 or 70, how judges felt about awarding those points, and what in a performance would earn either 25 or 100 points? Judges at both tournaments used similar phrases: "flawless," "perfection," "awe," "no room for improvement," "amazing," "passion for the per-

formance," "confidence," "connecting to the audience," "altered the way I think," "effects me," and "magic." In fact 31 judges at the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. used the words perfect/perfection or flawless to describe a performance meriting a 100. Twelve judges at the N.F.A. used these terms. Four judges at each tournament suggested that a perfect score is warranted when the judge forgets where they are, loses track of the time, or forgets to write. It is interesting to note that such a large number of judges at the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. used the terms perfect or flawless when according to Goodnow and Carlson (2009), far more perfect scores are awarded at the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. than at N.F.A. The implications of this will be considered in the discussion section.

The question asking about the lowest rate possible produced the most obvious differences. The majority of A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. respondents suggested that in order to receive a "1" the competitor would have to do one of four things: 1) not show up (10), 2) blatantly violate the rules of the event (24) 3) be overtly offensive (29) or 4) be a bad audience member (19). These results require some analysis and speculation. Not showing up to a round actually earns a zero from the tab room. But the fact that judges suggested that a student would have to not show up reveals how serious a one point rating would be. Blatantly violating the rules is an obvious reason to award one point. Offensive behavior, whether in word choice, topic or literature selection, or behavior, is subjective. Certainly, since all judging is subjective finding any of the above offensive would send a message to a student about their choices. Finally, being a bad audience member should be instructive for coaches and students alike. Often students focus on their performance and do not consider the fact that judges are always judging. Only 14 judges mentioned quality of the performance as a justification for awarding one point. Equally instructive are the 7 judges who suggested they would never award just one point. Clearly, one point for most A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. judges is reserved for factors outside of the actual quality of the performance.

N.F.A. survey results, however, did often cite qualitative reasons for a "70" with 27 judges citing qualitative reasons for awarding a 70. While some judges did cite rude (4) or offensive behavior (14) and breaking the rules (21) for awarding the lowest points possible, more judges cited failings in the quality of the performance. Comments included "lack of development," "ill prepared," "multiple verbal and memory slips," "weak sources," "poor selection of piece," "poor content," "very poor technique," "ineffectively conveying the message intended," "serious diction problems," "not be well thought out," "disengaged from the piece," "leave questions," and "unimpressive performance." Time issues constituted 15 of the 21 responses about breaking the rules and might also warrant a "70."

When judges were asked how they felt about awarding the highest or lowest points, comments were similar for both tournaments. While many judges admitted rarely if ever giving the highest or lowest points, judges universally felt "great" or "good" if the performance justified awarding the highest points. Judges generally felt "bad" about awarding the lowest points.

The last section asked judges how they felt about rating points in general. Again, responses were similar for both tournaments. Responses were approximately equally split in favor or against rating points. Those in favor stated that rating points enabled a judge to illustrate the relative strength of performances in rounds, communicated to students how much they needed to improve, and provided an indication of the overall strength of the round. Those against rating points suggested that there was no universal standard for what rating points mean, so that one judge's 25 or 100 was another judge's 21 or 90. In addition, judges at both tournaments disparaged "point fairies" or "point mongers." Those against rating points advocated eliminating points in favor of a different tie break system with some promoting the use of reciprocals. Some who like rating points indicated that if points were eliminated as a method for calculating standings, they would still like to see points awarded to provide another method of communicating the judge's evaluation of student performance. There also seems to be confusion as to whether points can be tied at both tournaments. Different judges at both tournaments stated they were either glad that points could be tied or wished that they could be.

The survey for judges at both tournaments asked respondents which scale they preferred. The small sample was fairly split between the scales. Those suggesting they preferred the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. scale cited the fact that they were more used to that scale and, therefore, more comfortable with it. Judges who preferred the N.F.A. scale also stated they were more used to that scale but also suggested that the scale was easier to use because of its similarity to a grading scale. One judge's comparison of the two scales contended that with the N.F.A. scale you have the presumption that the student has achieved up to 70 points of value while with the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. scale low points do not offer the reward of any effort. Other judges suggested that the N.F.A. scale does provide more opportunity for varying points because the scale is broader.

Discussion

The results of this survey reveal a difference between how A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. and N.F.A. judges perceive the relative scales of the tournament, specifically how they view the lower point ranges. For A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. judges the lowest points mean that a student has purposefully not shown up, offended the audience, broken the rules, or been a bad audience member. While judges at N.F.A. also cited these reasons, these judges commented more often on the quality of the performance. While many aspects of the survey produced similar responses, the questions about the low points were the most instructive.

Overall, the survey results have implications about the perceptions of rating points at both tournaments. Judges using the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. scale seem to perceive the lower ranges as punishment. This may be due to the idea that just a couple of points do not reward the student for anything positive that they may have done. The N.F.A. scale on the other hand does seem to

imply that students are awarded at least 70 points for the positive parts of their performance. For judges, the 1-25 scale is unique in their world of forensics, with no equal scale used elsewhere. The N.F.A. scale may be more familiar to judges, the vast majority of whom are also teachers. Teachers are well accustomed to giving "C's." Consequently, giving a "C" grade at a tournament may not feel as harsh as awarding 1 point.

The idea that judges at A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. view low points as having to do with egregious behavior explains, at least in part, why there is such a limited range of points used at that tournament as evidenced in Goodnow & Carlson's (2009) study of rating points. Since the competitor's behavior has to be offensive or break rules, the lower ranges must also be associated with those behaviors. N.F.A. judges view the lower ranges as indicating a poor quality in performance. Consequently, awarding the lower points may be perceived as acceptable as an evaluative tool at N.F.A.

An additional perceptual difference arises in the idea of awarding a perfect score. For A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. judges, awarding a perfect score is tied most often with a "perfect" performance. Yet, statistically, A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. awards far more perfect scores than N.F.A. (Goodnow & Carlson, 2009). It can be argued that because the qualification procedures are more difficult, the quality of performances is much higher at the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. On the one hand, given that judges stated that performances would have to be "perfect" or "flawless" to warrant a 25, it seems difficult to believe that in any given round there were five perfect performances as evidenced in Goodnow & Carlson's research. On the other hand, the comparative quality of competition between the two tournaments might be a fruitful area for future research. Research might be conducted on the crossover between both judges and competitors at the two tournaments and the ranks and rates awarded by judges and the ranks and rates received by competitors. For example, assuming relative consistency in performance, would a student who earned 25's at the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. also earn 100's at N.F.A.s? This type of research might lend insight into the subconscious perspectives about the tournaments themselves.

The question of the use of rating points is a perpetual one at both tournaments, especially A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. The limited range of points used is often cited as a primary reason for eliminating their use at the national tournament.[1] The limited range along with the lack of universal standards for what the points mean suggests a possible direction for the tournament management. If rating points will continue to be used, tournament administrators may want to provide an interpretation of what points mean. This interpretation could be similar to what the World Universities Debating Championship uses. While this scale is meant for a two person team, each person is ranked individually from 50-100 (see Figure 2). The utility of this scale is in its clear demarcation of what points may mean. However, since the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. tournament and scale is well established, changing perceptions of what points

[1] The author was on the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. committee for ten years where the topic of rating points was raised frequently.

mean, especially the lower ranges may be difficult, if not impossible.

Limitations

While the general surveys had a good response rate, the combined survey had a small response rate, producing one limitation of the study. Judges self-reported that 20 judges attended both A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. and N.F.A. However, only ten completed the combined survey. This can be explained in a variety of ways. Judges could have elected to not take the combined survey. The tournament question asked which tournaments they attend but not necessarily specifying attending that year. Finally, judges could have answered the tournament question in regard to their team, not necessarily their own attendance. While the pool of respondents suggested that only a small number of judges attended both tournaments, the data produced did not suggest a preference for one scale over the other. Perhaps results from more judges who use both scales would produce more insights.

Another limitation of the study arose in the process of developing the surveys. Since this research was funded by a grant, the survey was developed and administered before the quantitative data from the tournament results was analyzed. Had the surveys been developed post the quantitative analysis, the surveys could have been tailored to the specific tournaments. For example, the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. survey could have asked specifically why the lower range of the scale was not used. The N.F.A. survey could have asked if judges consider that scale in relation to how grades are given. However, since the survey was developed prior to the statistical analysis, the questions for both tournaments were identical with changes made to reflect the different point scales.

These limitations, however, do point the way for future research. Specifically, an attitudinal survey can now be developed with responses to this open ended survey in mind. For example, attitudes could be assessed in regard to what exactly points mean to judges. In addition, more specific information can be garnered in terms of how judges decide what a point value means. Results from a survey such as this could aid tournament directors in developing a scale with an interpretation of the meaning of points. This scale could work with general perceptions of those meanings and, thus, make the meaning of a specific point value codified for the judging pool.

A second area for potential research is to survey the competitors themselves. This survey sought to assess how judges award points. A future survey that considers student perceptions about rating points could determine if students and judges view points from the same perspective, not only the meaning of different point values but their purposes, as well.

As the results of this survey illustrate, rating points play an important role in forensics competition. Obviously, points are important in determining standings and elimination round participants. But these results clearly show that points are also a powerful way for the judge to communicate to the competitor. Unfortunately, this survey also reveals that the perceptions about

what these points mean are varied. This research lays the foundation for future research into the practice of awarding speaker points. Additionally, these results should point out to tournament administrators that for something that is so important to the outcome of national competition perhaps more consideration should be given to standardize the meaning behind the various point values.

A final limitation of this study lies in the self-report of judge behavior. Since 31 judges at the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. noted that a performance needed to be perfect to achieve a 25 and Goodnow & Carlson (2009) report the abundance of 25's awarded at the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. there seems to be some incongruity between the self-report and the actual behavior. While this author does not mean to diminish the potential quality of performances at the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T., the language respondents used to answer the question about what a student would need to do to earn a 25 implies that a 25 is a rarity. Language, such as, "it would have to be an absolutely perfect performance" or "they are rare and should be given on rare occasions," implies a frequency less often observed than in Goodnow & Carlson's study. Future research could track particular judges and their point awarding behavior to determine whether a few judges give everyone 25's or if these scores are spread out across the judging spectrum.

Conclusion

This study sought to explore how judges perceive rating points and how judges award them. While A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. and N.F.A. judges perceive some aspects of rating points in similar ways, there are some aspects that are perceived very differently. Primary among these differences was the perception of what the lowest points possible meant. For A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. judges, the lowest points were reserved for violations of ethics, rules, or civility. These perceptions may explain why a limited range of points is used at the A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. N.F.A. judges, on the other hand, viewed the lowest points as primarily a reflection of quality or lack thereof. This perception may explain why a much broader range of points is used at N.F.A. The results of this study provide a foundation for studying the communicative activity of awarding rating points.

Figure 1. Demographic Data

Characteristic	AFA-NIET	NFA
Sex		
Male	40	26
Female	35	18
Years Coaching		
1-3	25	12
4-8	26	11
9-12	7	6
13-20	13	8
21 +	4	7
Forensics Position		
Director of Forensics	36	27
Graduate Teaching Assistant	15	5
Assistant Coach	13	7
Hired Judge	1	3
Other	10	2

Figure 2. World Universities Debating Championship Judging Matrix (http://www.wudc.net/articles&docs/rules.php)

Grade	Marks	Meaning
A	180-200	**Excellent to flawless.** The standard you would expect to see from a team at the Semi Final / Grand Final level of the tournament. The team has many strengths and few, if any, weaknesses.
B	160-179	**Above average to very good.** The standard you would expect to see from a team at the finals level or in contention to make to the finals. The team has clear strengths and some minor weaknesses.
C	140-159	**Average.** The team has strengths and weaknesses in roughly equal proportions.
D	120-139	**Poor to below average.** The team has clear problems and some minor strengths.
E	100-119	**Very poor.** The team has fundamental weaknesses and few, if any, strengths.

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Appendix A

A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. Ratings Point Survey

I am conducting a survey about the use of ratings points at national tournaments. In answering the questions that follow, please consider your recent experience judging at the American Forensics Association National Individual Events Tournament. The results of this survey will be compiled for an article for possible publication in the *National Forensics Journal*. Your participation in this survey is greatly appreciated. Your consent to take the survey will be taken as your consent to participate in this study.

Demographic Information

1. Male Female

2. Years Coaching

1-3 4-8 9-12 13-20 21+

3. Times at A.F.A.-N.I.E.T.?

1-3 4-8 9-12 13-20 21+

4. Forensics Position

Hired Judge Director of Forensics Assistant Coach
Graduate Assistant Other

5. What national competitions do you attend?

A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. N.F.A. Pi Kappa Delta DSR-TKA Novice
Nationals Interstate Oratory Other

6. Are you in a teaching position outside of your participation in forensics?

Yes No

Open Ended Questions

7. Using the 1-25 point scale, what were the highest points you awarded at A.F.A.-N.I.E.T.'s?

8. Using the 1-25 point scale, what were the lowest points you awarded at A.F.A.-N.I.E.T.'s?

9. Using the 1-25 point scale, describe the typical range of points you tend to award?

10. What factors do you consider when determining the rating points you award a speaker?

11. In terms of awarding ratings points, do you see any similarities among public address, oral interpretation and limited preparation events? **If yes, please answer Q#12; if no, please skip to Q#13.**

12. In terms of awarding rating points, please describe specifically any similarities you see among public address, oral interpretation and limited preparation events.

13. In terms of awarding ratings points, do you see any differences among public address, oral interpretation and limited preparation events? **If yes, please answer Q14; if no, please skip to Q#15.**

14. Please describe any differences in the awarding of rating points for public address, oral interpretation and limited preparation events.

15. In your estimation, what are the specific behaviors, characteristics or skills a student would have to exhibit in order to earn a perfect score of 25?

16. In your estimation, what are the specific behaviors, characteristics or skills a student would have to exhibit in order to earn the lowest possible score of one (1)?

17. How would you feel about awarding a perfect score of 25 ?

18. How would you feel about awarding a one (1), the lowest score possible?

19. Generally speaking, how do you feel about the concept of "ratings points"?

20. If there is anything not covered elsewhere on this questionnaire that you would like to comment on regarding ratings points, please do so here:

N.F.A. Ratings Point Survey

I am conducting a survey about the use of ratings points at national tournaments. In answering the questions that follow, please consider your recent experience judging at the National Forensics Association National Championship Tournament. The results of this survey will be compiled for an article for possible publication in the National Forensic Journal. Your participation in this survey is greatly appreciated. Your consent to take the survey will be taken as your consent to participate in this study.

Demographic Information

1. Male Female

2. Years Coaching

1-3 4-8 9-12 13-20 21+

3. Times at A.F.A.-N.I.E.T.?

1-3 4-8 9-12 13-20 21+

4. Forensics Position

Hired Judge Director of Forensics Assistant Coach Graduate Assistant Other

5. What national competitions do you attend?

A.F.A.-N.I.E.T. N.F.A. Pi Kappa Delta DSR-TKA
Novice Nationals Interstate Oratory Other

6. Are you in a teaching position outside of your participation in forensics?

Yes No

Open Ended Questions

7. Using the 70-100 point scale, what were the highest points you awarded at N.F.A.s?

8. Using the 70-100 point scale, what were the lowest points you awarded at N.F.A.s?

9. Using the 70-100 point scale, describe the typical range of points you tend to award?

10. What factors do you consider when determining the rating points you award a speaker?

11. In terms of awarding ratings points, do you see any similarities among public address, oral interpretation and limited preparation events? **If yes, please answer Q#12; if no, please skip to Q#13.**

12. In terms of awarding rating points, please describe specifically any similarities you see among public address, oral interpretation and limited preparation events.

13. In terms of awarding ratings points, do you see any differences among public address, oral interpretation and limited preparation events? **If yes, please answer Q14; if no, please skip to Q#15.**

14. Please describe any differences in the awarding of rating points for public address, oral interpretation and limited preparation events.

15. In your estimation, what are the specific behaviors, characteristics or skills a student would have to exhibit in order to earn a perfect score of 100?

16. In your estimation, what are the specific behaviors, characteristics or skills a student would have to exhibit in order to earn the lowest possible score of 70?

17. How would you feel about awarding a perfect score of 100?

18. How would you feel about awarding a 70, the lowest score possible?

19. Generally speaking, how do you feel about the concept of "ratings points"?

20. If there is anything not covered elsewhere on this questionnaire that you would like to comment on regarding ratings points, please do so here:

Appendix B

Ratings Points Survey

If you attended both A.F.A.-N.I.E.T.'s and N.F.A.s this year as a judge, there are just three more questions.

1. How do you feel the differences in point scales (1-25 versus 70-100) affects the standards you use to award points?

2. Which scale do you prefer to use and why?

3. If there is anything else you would like to comment on regarding the comparison of these two point scales, please do so here:

Debating Christianity From Below: (Re)writing the History of the National Christian College Forensic Invitational/National Christian College Forensic Association

Crystal Lane Swift, PhD, Mount San Antonio College

The author would like to thank Dr. Ruth L. Bowman, Professor of Performance Studies at Louisiana State University, and the reviewers at the National Forensic Journal *for their contributions to this project.*

Abstract

This paper is a genealogy of NCCFI/NCCFA from the perspective of its participants. The study is a combination of texts with the goal of fulfilling Pollock's call to make history go and Levine's call for historians to write better historiographies. The central concern of this paper is not to tell the official narrative of the organization. Instead, it offers a narrative to include both archival and ephemeral texts to tell the history from below. The conclusion which the author draws regarding the current state of NCCFI/NCCFA is that if the organization is to remain true to its purpose, there must be a radical change from within, a "resurrection" of sorts.

The National Christian College Forensic Invitational (NCCFI) was started in 1998 in reaction to the risqué norms that some educators perceived, had become commonplace in intercollegiate forensics. Dr. Kevin Jones, in particular was horrified at a final round of duo interpretation in which one duo was sexually explicit. As a reaction to what he found appalling, Dr. Jones sent out feelers and when he became the director of forensics at Azuza Pacific University, he hosted the first ever NCCFI (see appendix for exact wording). The only writing available on the history of NCCFI/NCCFA (National Christian College Forensic Association[1]) is the 10 paragraph explanation on the NCCFI/NCCFA webpage (A Brief History of NCCFI). This tournament has expanded the possibilities of success of Christian college competitors and (presumably) provided an opportunity for Christian competitors and coaches alike to enjoy forensic competition free of secular values held above Christian values. Hence, a genealogy of this tournament is warranted. Because I personally saw competitive success at NCCFI 2003 and judged at NCCFI 2004, I am a person with some experience and investment in the organization. The method for collecting this history included accessing written accounts, pictures, my own memories, and the memories of others who were involved in NCCFI/NCCFA. Others' narratives were collected via email interviews. I simply asked them to share their thoughts or stories about NCCFI/NCCFA.

[1] The organization decided to rename itself the National Christian College Association, with its national tournament called the National Christian College Invitational after I had finished competing.

Only three people chose to respond. Though I know their names, they will remain confidential. The reason I am reporting how few people responded is because I suspect that there is some level of fear of speaking out against the NCCFA. I think that the respondents and I agree that the NCCFA is good overall, but there are issues that need to be discussed. Bringing up these issues, I know, is risky. "The artistic use of oral performance is also part of a slightly different genealogy, one that explicitly deploys theater in the service of community formation and community interrogation" (Jackson, 2005, p. 53). A performative based genealogy is justified for this particular paper because the currently accepted narrative of the NCCFA is entirely linear and one-sided. There is currently very little written on the organization at all, but NCCFI continues to grow. While I have no documentation of it, there are conversations that swirl in the forensic community at large about this organization and tournament, which indicates to me that the organization is ripe for investigation. Additionally, because performance (forensic competition) is at the center of the purpose of the organization, it follows that a performance-based critique be utilized. NCCFA members are bodies in space and time, performing rituals under constraints placed on them by the organization. The narratives from myself and from others serve to both legitimize and negate the official narrative from the official organization of NCCFA. This genealogy begins with a theoretical grounding, followed by some of the "official" narrative of the organization, then explores the history from below from my own as well as others' experiences, which connect to related histories, and concludes with the impacts of this exploration.

Theoretical/Methodological Grounding

(Or, a section to justify this paper to non-historiographers)

I usually write more traditional papers. This one, however, is aimed specifically at questioning and contesting tradition. I aim not to indict or delegitimize the work of the NCCFI/NCCFA. Quite the opposite, in fact; I indict myself along with some of my perceived practices of the organization. The goal of my critique is to spur scholarly discussion on the subject, in the hopes that NCCFI/NCCFA will be around and held in the highest regard for the long run. This paper does not contain a literature review on the subject, because, frankly, there is no literature to review on NCCFI/NCCFA. Instead, this section of this paper serves to justify my method of performative historiography. Because there is only one published piece on NCCFI/NCCFA, which I include in the next section, and that published piece is written by one person and serves as the history of the organization, historiography is the most appropriate method I can imagine to begin this discussion. Historiography aims to question and contest history, including the author's own interpretation of history. As explained by Venn (2007):

> What is at stake in rethinking and remembering the problematic of hegemony are the continuities and discontinuities in a struggle that reaches back into history yet each

> time confronts new configurations of power and the threat of new servitudes. The thinking of technics and the thinking of being intersect in the thinking of culture as the history of the becoming of being. A non-transcendent ontology, at once materialist and mindful, is implicit in this new framing of the question of ways of being and forms of life. It is the project that the genealogy of power reveals. The task for cultural theory in rethinking the parameters of culture concerns balancing the provisionality of the conceptual tools one invents for this task with the need to take stock of the big political picture, without either losing itself in the abstraction of grand theory or losing sight of the ethical and political commitments that drive the will to put an end to all forms of oppressive power. (p. 123)

As revealed by the above passage, the undertaking I am engaging in is a risky one. There is quite a bit as stake in terms of ethics, credibility, and power. There are those who will reject the approach altogether, the content itself, or perhaps feel threatened. I believe that this is a worthwhile task anyhow, and I hope that it spurs discussion both in and out of forensic journals. I know that I am not the leading authority on forensics, Christianity, or NCCFI/NCCFA. As Venn, above, pointed out, it is essential to contest the hegemonic power in order to end oppressive power. No one else is writing this historiography, though, and I am quite sure that it needs to be written and rewritten.

Further, along these lines, as put by Darling (2007), many may feel that writing a history of events that most of the audience actually has memories of is inappropriate. While those memories are still with us, he pointed out, however, is the paramount time to write such a history. Given that histories written in second, third and fourth accounts are inherently inaccurate or at least incomplete, writing a first hand account while memory has yet to become history is appropriate. Suffice it to say, because a page in history has been turned regarding most recent historical events, and because the more that is written in scholarly journals about forensics the more academic it will be perceived, I present my historiography on the National Christian College Forensic Invitational and the National Christian College Forensic Association. In terms of the religious nature of this project, I believe that this is also academically justifiable. Griffin (1998) explained "the scholarship of discovery comes closest to what academia usually regards as research because it increases the stock of human knowledge" (p. 108). The current project is primarily concerned with the scholarship of discovery. It is simultaneously a discovery of NCCFI/NCCFA and of self.

In an explanation of the interaction of his faith and his scholarship, Griffin (2004) wrote, "I don't claim that these particular ways of interrogating my profession of faith with my academic profession are normative for others. But perhaps personal narrative can be an effective way to span the typical gap between faith and scholarship." (p. 25) I, too, am attempting to interrogate how my faith, my religion, and my professional activity intersect.

These concepts and beliefs are close to my heart, as I know they are close to many others' hearts. I am not intending to give commands through this piece whatsoever. I am making no normative demands. While there are some who will reject the method of the present study outright, I believe I have now provided a theoretical justification for the method. I hope that there will be responses and discussion in order to continually enrich our understanding and exploration of NCCFI and NCCFA.

The "Official" Narrative of NCCFI/NCCFA

(Or the 10 paragraphs one person wrote about the organization and put on the Internet)

Some narratives scholars suggest that there are multiple "master narratives" of the NCCFA. Castle (1993) argued, however:

> The term "master narrative" is of special interest in this discussion and refers to the narratives of Western culture, largely teleological, that govern historical as well as religious and social discourses. The most influential master narratives include the Christian conception of providence, Kant's theory of universal history, Hegel's world-spirit, and the various Marxian visions of utopia. (p. 324-325)

This argument demonstrates that the accepted history serves not only an observational, but also an at least potentially prescriptive function. For this study, Jones's recounting serves as the master narrative of the NCCFA. Those who would disagree that Jones's recounting is the master narrative point out a valid argument, that the official and accepted narrative of any organization, person, or historical event is constantly in flux, at least within an intellectual or academic circle. As put by Roberts (1995):

> The old master narrative was "strong," presenting its particular understanding of the hierarchy—Western, male, political, and so forth—as necessary and inevitable. But as we come to experience our world as nothing but history, we recognize that the master narrative is itself merely historical and thus open to contest. It encompasses whatever historians put into it; historians endlessly compete to get this or that included and to get the hierarchy of importance arranged in this way as opposed to that. As we grasp the cultural import of that competition, our historical self-understanding becomes more tension-ridden than ever before. (p.285)

While I acknowledge that this is, in fact, the case, there is an important oppositional position to this. To people not personally or professionally invested in that particular organization, etc., the accepted master narrative will likely be the published narrative, the narrative officially owned by that particular organization. This is naturally the case, because those outside of the organi-

zation would have little to no motivation to reach deeper for a multi-narrative history. To my knowledge, Jones's is the only current published work on the NCCFA. Hence, this serves currently as the organization's master narrative. The aim of this particular paper is not to dismantle the organization, but to call into contest the current master narrative. As Lyotard (1984) argued, the "grand narrative has lost its credibility." (p.37) When there are more narratives to consider than just one account of a history, it is essential to explore more voices than simply the author of the master or grand narrative, which takes the absolute credibility of the original narrative away. If this argument is correct, contestation such as the present paper is desperately needed for the NCCFA. The current history of NCCFI/NCCFA is included in the National Christian College Forensics Invitational Constitution and Bylaws: Approved with revisions March 13, 2004.

NCCFI/NCCFA's History Contested

(Or, what I, and three others say "really" happened and how this connects to other histories)

The story of NCCFI/NCCFA as it is actually practiced differs quite a bit from how it was initially intended to be enacted. Dr. Kevin Jones wanted a tournament that would be separate from secular tournaments. What he created, on the contrary, was a tournament which is exactly like secular tournaments in most aspects. The stringent norms of suit-wearing and (often fake) smiles are ever-present at NCCFI. This is what Connerton (1993) would characterize as celebrating and consenting to the (tournament) ritual. The ritualistic practice of continually wearing the same suit, walking the same triangle (from point to point in platform and limited preparation speeches), holding the same black book (for interpretation of literature events), and having the same number of observations (in debate), illustrates the (sub)conscious support of NCCFI participants to forensic norms at large. I have written my critiques of the NCCFI/NCCFA based on the purpose I understand both the tournament and the organization to have:

> The goal of the NCCFA is to provide member schools of the CCCU and schools of similar beliefs the opportunity to gather once a year and celebrate our faith while we engage in an activity we all love . . . Additionally, schools who support the one true Christian faith are allowed to participate. While not all historic church bodies subscribe to a creedal declaration of faith, the tenets of the Christian faith that schools are asked to support are as detailed by the Nicene creed below: We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through

> him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen. All schools in membership agree to encourage students to perform material and conduct themselves in an appropriately Christian manner. All schools in membership recognize the values and beliefs of the audiences of the NCCFI and perform material accordingly . . . All judges are expected to uphold the philosophy of the tournament. (http://nccfa.org.org/constitution-0304.pdf).

My Physical Representation of my NCCFI Memory

If you were to pick it up, it would feel thin and slightly sticky on one side. This is my favorite surviving representation of NCCFI 2003. Your fingerprint could alter it permanently. It may feel cool, like the evening it depicts. It emits no odor, and I wouldn't recommend tasting it. If you shake it hard enough, you may hear a sound similar to the sound of one hand clapping. A quick glance would reveal an image covered mostly in the dark of night, so look closer. This moment was captured by a lens, held by a hand, attached to the body of a person I do not remember; I should remember. Captured in time is this representation of representations of moments that seemed fair and unfair, of moments that were and moments that were made up. All of those hours of sweat, tears, and frustration culminate in this image, or do they? "The myth of the objective object is enacted in historicity as visualism and consumption." (Pollock, 1998, p. 5) This image presents itself as if it is complete, but it can never be complete. The consumption of these women is only partially expressed, only partially represented.

Three bright smiles, full of bright white teeth; this is the absolute last bit of energy left, supported solely by caffeine and nicotine. There are three bodies, clad in matching black suits and white collared shirts. All six hands are occupied with blocks of wood, decorated with shiny bronze and black placards, announcing the accomplishments of the beautiful female bodies, brilliant minds, and trained voices that earned and accepted them. The middle face is framed with hairs, as if they are cotton strands, pulled reck-

lessly from a neatly formed ball. On the left, dark skin encompasses the body of a woman with neatly curled hair. On the right, the woman's face is partially covered by thick, black-rimmed glasses. All the women are touching. "Lacan has remarked, 'The picture is in my eye, but I am not in the picture.'" (in Mavor, 1998, p. 226) However, in this case, I am in the picture. Perhaps I am not in the picture. I am gazing at a representation of myself. Was this my defining moment? Have I already made my ultimate contribution? I cannot seem to remember.

The Moment Which Made Me Feel Like I Hung the Moon Instead of God

Heavy gray strap presses into shoulder, protected by 30-year old polyester and shoulder pad. Attached to the strap is a bag shaped like a box. This activity has become so routine, yet somehow stomach still threatens to erupt, while palms pour out anxious sweat. Simultaneously, these contradictory bodily reactions bring out excitement and fear. "We turn to wild mind to keep the hand moving on the playing field of the page . . ." (Madison, 2005, p. 189) Body picks up feet, clad in heels too high, in order to keep moving to exit the awards ceremony. Forensics is riddled with hierarchies and categorization, which mirrors this faith in which it is operating here. The winners of the awards are now history, history confirmed by memory. "The remembered past is both individual and collective." (Lowenthal, 2005, p. 194) Memories and moments of this activity are equally embedded in the individual as well as the team. Teams perform separately, as individuals, yet constitute a collective body at the same time. Each individual carries a different bag, full of different memories, which are all the same.

Within this gray bag, so carefully packed and carried is piled a trove of individual and collective memories, made and yet to be. The memories yet to be are the memories that are to become, and to become written. ". . . [T]hose who don't appreciate the current historiography are free to show the way by creating a better one." (Levine, 1993, p. 3) Creation of this better historiography begins within this bag. Three thick, wooden pen holders on top shield the rest of the contents from harm; simultaneously the awards announce to onlookers the accomplishments of the mind and body attached to the weighted shoulder. A tree or two was butchered for these awards. What would Jesus do? Award something other than dead trees, perhaps.

Beneath these remains of trees clink together three navy blue mugs that really resemble beer steins, though any alcohol consumption is strictly forbidden by the organization. What would Jesus drink? Wine, perhaps. There is a black book, containing words that were, of course, recited in character. In this space, there were no f-words, s-words, or b-words allowed, yet somehow, "nigger, nigger, nigger" triumphed. What would Jesus say? Love, perhaps. Though the black book was accepted, the pink book was rejected, how dare one go against the norm? The same way one is forced to argue that Jesus was a democrat and God does not love the mega-church. How would Jesus judge? Not at all, perhaps. Buried deep in the bottom beyond the note cards, beyond the red and black pens, pink and black book (filled with char-

acter text), the debate flows (1 Corinthians 4:6, New International Version), the stopwatch and the extra can of diet cola lurk the forbidden. Newport 100 hard pack hides next to purple lighter. What would Jesus smoke?

The Aforementioned Moment Contested

Trophies, suits, names announced, audience applauded, bags full, bodies moving, breathing, sweating, smiles, frowns, mother, 30 year old polyester, duo partner, debate partner, representatives from places throughout the nation…a complete awards ceremony. All rules were followed, car was waiting, cigarettes smoked off campus, my name was on the postings, my full name was announced, duo partner, debate partner, mom, witnesses would agree with my trophies, then my title was revealed online . . . months later, my title became shared, only 10 paragraphs explain the whole, anyhow, conversation with Dustin,[2] curiosity repressed, history silently contested. My titles were won legitimately, proven through what Toulmin would deem data: my name appeared on five postings of the possible seven, my mother, my duo partner, my debate partner, and representatives from places throughout the nation witnessed my name announced, my trophies received, my titles revealed. I am certain I remember, clearly, those representations exist in California and in my office . . . I feel so certain. I am pretty sure I remember the first time I saw my name online, a virtual representation of that which I thought I had accomplished. History is contested, when her name appeared next to my name, as if it were *our* title. It isn't *our* title, it is *mine*. "Performance is often referred to as a 'contested concept' because as a concept, method, event, and event, it is variously envisioned and employed." (Madison & Hamera, 2006, p. xi) All Dustin can tell me is, "They gave me some of her points." But there is no contest that I have not clearly won. It is an absolute truth, just as the organization promotes absolute truth, "Jesus answered, 'I am the way, the truth, and the light. No one comes to the Father except through me'" (John 14:6, New International Version). I continue to choose to suffer in silence, perhaps because history is violent, or perhaps because *I assumed* NCCFI/NCCFA discourages the questioning of authority.[3] Even more likely, I suppose is that there is so little explanation of the Christian National Tournament at all. There is only one published perspective, only 10 paragraphs, only what one human being values, to represent the Christian colleges of the US. An alternative to the official narrative from someone other than myself follows:

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[2] Names have been changed to conceal identity.

[3] I am not actually, personally still upset that my title is shared on the NCCFA website. I was for some time, but never said anything about it to anyone in charge. I believe that this serves as an illustration of simply accepting institutional decisions without any contestation, and more largely accepting history without contestation. The reason I included this particular passage was not to gripe (though I know many will think that is how it appears). Instead, I wanted to illustrate, on a personal narrative level contestation of history as well as some self-reflexivity, questioning my own memory and history, because I *know* that I do not have all of the answers. Since writing the first draft of this paper, I have been informed that the reason I share my title is because, apparently, I only received the award to begin with due to a tab error. Apparently, I was not the rightful champion, but the organization was kind enough not to strip me of the title. I sincerely appreciate that.

> My freshmen year while attending this tournament at Pt. Loma University in the midst of debate rounds is where the judgment began. A resolution was "This house would deplore the mega-church." A girl on my team was ultimately told (during the round) by the team she was debating against, that because she attended a church of more than 5000 people (the in-round definition of the mega-church) that she was going to hell. Many of the rounds were focused in a similar lens. As opposed to actually debating world issues in a Christian friendly environment, it turned into a game of, who can cite the Bible more during a debate round. Extemp[oraneous] questions consisted of things like "How should Christians deal with taxes?" which really isn't a regular thing to file the newspapers system that extemp[oraneous] often entails. Impromptu quotations would consist of the choice of 3 being: a Psalm, a Proverb, and a quotation from a leading religious figure which again felt directed and extremely oppressive. It was as though they were saying, 'you must talk about God stuff.' Or for those who try to disagree with the quotation, what are they going to say? "In interpreting the quotation given to us through John 3:16, I'm going to disagree with God." Sometimes at these tournaments the caliber of performance also greatly declines. . . Being that Christianity in it of itself is becoming increasing more factioned and fractured, it also imposes the notion that in order to be a good Christian one must be conservative and Republican . . . The Christ I've read about in the gospels was about loving people and is not what many of the followers these days behave as.

The above narrative seems a far cry from what the official narrative would have us believe NCCFI/NCCFA actually is and does. In support of alternate narratives which may contribute to my own (re)conceptualizing of NCCFI/NCCFA, I went searching in the LSU Rural Life Museum. I went looking for something to support the activity that gives me the passion to continue. It took a keen eye and some divinely inspired patience. I walked past the buggies, corner devoted to slavery, and the pretty porcelain dolls. As I did, I recalled what I read on the Rural Life Museum web page, which presumably guides those who visit to the conclusions that the museum wishes us to draw:

> Ten different flags have flown over Louisiana, and a wide variety of peoples have settled here . . . Largely forgotten by the 20th century, the lifestyles and cultures of these pre-industrial Louisianans are recalled at the LSU Rural Life Museum . . . The LSU Rural Life Museum is divided into 3 sections (General Information, 2006).

One of these sections is the Barn, which "contains hundreds of artifacts dealing with everyday rural life dating from prehistoric times to the early 20th century" http://rurallife.lsu.edu/html/barn1.html (General Information, 2006). The barn is where I chose to begin my journey, and as it turns out, this was a wise choice. Over in a corner beyond several other rooms stood a curio tucked away. Had the museum wanted to, they could have certainly made these charms far more noticeable and accessible. For some reason, they did not. Not only do they seem to not want to show them off, but they also seemed to want to guard them from harm. A thick layer of glass prevented me from touching the treasures that I finally found. There were three. They all had long, thin handles, in different shades of brown, which ended abruptly in a thick, stumpy cylinder. I wanted to pick them up.

This mix of culture to which the museum appeals is entrenched in these gavels, because all of the cultures sought justice, which culminated in our judicial system, which uses gavels. At least, without further explanation, this is what I, the observer, am left to assume. This marks them as centripetal. They are an anchor, a symbol of stability. The fact that the gavels are physically situated separate from the section of the museum of slavery indicates the injustice of slavery. The gavels are the ultimate voice in determining justice, and separate from the symbols of slavery. The curio in which the gavels are placed makes them nearly hidden, which hides the fact that there was a system of justice in place simultaneously with a system of slavery. Hence, the symbols of slavery in the museum bear the maze of injustice. Finally, the collection housed in the barn is presented as a collection of artifacts representing the everyday. Everyday practices are embedded within and inscribed upon bodies. Therefore, the absent/present bodies in the barn take on the mark of justice. However, the gavels bear the mark of injustice and many other interpretations, which only those willing to question them will be able to see.

The gavels are just like the National Parliamentary Debate Association (NPDA) speaker awards that the Point Loma Sunset Cliffs Tournament always offers, the envy of all who lose. The Point Loma Sunset Cliffs Invitational Tournament awards gavels every year to the top twenty speakers in NPDA debate. In fact, the tournament host takes the time to inscribe the name of each winner onto each gavel. I imagine that this inscribing practice takes a significant amount of time, effort, and money. No wonder I was always disappointed that I did not win one of these coveted awards. Of course, at this point, I suppose that I would be thrilled to settle for one of these gavels that "the powers that be" of the Rural Life Museum are preventing me from touching. On their left, within this curio was a collection of mugs in a variety of colors, but all of them had some kind of shiny, ornate decorations and are reminiscent of beer steins. I have 70 trophies. Most of them are encased in a curio cabinet that my mother gave me for my 13th birthday. Initially, I used the curio cabinet to house my "crystal" collection which was simultaneously a collection of Swarovski crystal and a play on my first name. As Benjamin (1968) reminds us, collectors are not concerned with the utility value of their collectables, but with the act of collecting, and of inheritance. As it turns out,

this is a good thing, because that Swarovski crystal had absolutely no utility value. This crystal collection was soon placed next to pottery I made, middle school choir awards, and nick knacks of all sorts. Then, in my first year of college, I started competing in forensics and, slowly but surely; each of those items was replaced by a forensics trophy. As I looked at the Rural Life Museum gavels next to mugs in this museum, I could feel my fingers carefully opening up the delicate doors of my own curio and taking each trophy out one by one to dust it and Windex the glass it sat upon. This is a ritual I usually put myself through at least a couple of times a year. Perhaps it is more of an obsession than a ritual. Additionally, some of my trophies are mugs, just like the mugs that sit next to these gavels that I was so happy to have found.

I find it both shocking and exciting that these gavels of yesteryear are positioned directly next to mugs, which remind me of my own awards. The mugs that I received as awards came from the Christian National tournament (NCCFI), so this realization leads me to search for some symbol to connect these representations of forensics awards to some representation of the faith that governs this activity in the culmination of NCCFI/NCCFA. It took me a significant amount of time to find the room that houses crosses, paintings, and statues devoted to Christ, separated from the gavels by a significant amount of space. Perhaps this separation of symbols of judgment and symbols of Christianity can reveal a lesson from the past that we ought to have learned. This idea of separation relates to what one coach diplomatically pointed out about NCCFI/NCCFA:

> There are a couple of differences that I find in attending this tournament as opposed to regular tournaments. First, the substance of pieces (especially interpretation) is always appropriate—meaning I never feel dirty or assaulted at the end of a performance as I often do at secular tournaments. This, I feel is one of the better qualities of the NCCFI tournament. However, in all honesty I must admit that there are other issues at an NCCFI tournament which are not so positive. The first is the quality of judge at an NCCFI tournament. I find that the quality of judges is far below what we typically find at a secular institution. Additionally, I find that NCCFI judges often have a bias against anything that is not far, far right in subject matter. I feel that as disrespectful as very liberal (read far, far left) judges are at a secular institution, finding my students have to fight bias and bigotry at a Christian tournament is even more frustrating. The second problem I have with NCCFI is the quality of competitor. I believe that in our attempt at a 'kinder, gentler' tournament, we lose a competitive edge. I find students winning in final rounds of impromptu using examples that wouldn't fly at a novice warm-up tournament (Martin Luther King, Jesus, Gandhi) and it is hard for my com-

petitors to understand the value of competing and losing against what they perceive as very novice performances.

The separation of man's judgment from God's seems to support the need to separate church and state. This separation is tricky, even for Christian authors to address. "It is an injustice when certain people are at large who have done and can still do great harm to others." (Kendall, 2002, p. 110) Former pastor, R. T. Kendall argued that justice is simultaneously in the hands of mankind and God. Because NCCFI/NCCFA is a Christian organization which most highly values God's judgment and simultaneously supports man's judgment (through the ballots and awards), this negotiation is difficult and situational within NCCFI/NCCFA.

In a similar fashion, the writing of the history of (in)justice is difficult and situational. Levine (1993) called upon us to rewrite histories from below, from the perspective of those who have traditionally been silenced. The duo that Shauntè and I ran at NCCFI was reliant on critical race theory as our significance. This was a history from below, in the fact that it questioned many white privileges, which are largely invisible and equally unjust. The duo serves both as a centripetal and centrifugal force for Shauntè and me. Hence, while physical space continues to pull us apart, the experience of winning duo together at NCCFI holds Shauntè and me together. Along the same vein, the gavels in the Rural Life Museum were used, I imagine, to silence the un-empowered, the poor, minorities, those people that Levine is directly referencing. As a *Law and Order* fan, the digitalized sound of a gavel hitting wood plays in my head as I see, in my mind's eye, the people silenced by these gavels. Corporeal bodies who may or may not have committed wrongs against other corporeal bodies or property were summoned before the scales of justices. Bodies who represented these scales lifted these gavels to force them down upon wooden desks. The sound that resulted from this meeting of wooden objects served a performative, illocutionary function: judgment was rendered.

This judgment, just or unjust, created the consequence for the body awaiting judgment. I imagine the corporeal bodies moved by these judgments were either ecstatic or completely defeated, akin to the *Law and Order* defendants, one of two absolute extremes in the emotional spectrum. Those who were ecstatic must have triumphed against their accusers, and those who were defeated and simultaneously depleted of energy were the bodies that would soon be locked away from most of society to rot in cells that seem inhumane to house a human. There is an inherent recognition of judgment. "Mere recognition thus transforms the visible past. Identifying and classifying may tell us much about relics but often occludes our view of them, sacrificing communion with the past to facts about it." (Lowenthall, 1985, p. 271) The corporeal bodies judging and being judged with the gavels are that which has become forgotten. These symbols, which seem to support a centripetal force, the anchor of the law, create centrifugal reactions, emotions, which is precisely the history from below that Levine would be interested in historiographers pursuing. Connerton (1989) argued that commemorative ceremonies

serve as legitimization for the empowered of a particular culture. The trials and mock trials performed with gavels are commemorative ceremonies. The gavels that I see were an accessory to complement the justice system that rendered what was right and what was wrong according to the powers that governed the society at the time. These gavels were performative, and as my mind plays out performances, they are performative. They did/do the done of justice. They were also illocutionary. The sound of the gavel indicated that a decision had been made. This decision had real, physical ramifications upon the bodies that it judged. These bodies were forced to pay the consequences of the actions, the corporeal practices that the mind attached to them chose (or didn't) to engage in. This bodily use of the gavel was performing and performative. It put on a show for the audience, those interested in what judgment would be rendered, but it also served as the doing of the done, and gavels used today still serve as the doing of the done. The doing is the moments that happen in the present with the gavels in trials and mock trials while the done are those trials and mock trials which have come before. Of course, *Law and Order* always refers to the done while it is doing. In fact, because the show is pre-recorded, it may actually serve as the done of the done.

This museum discovery operated, for me, as even further expansion of the archive of NCCFI. The gavels are trophies or tokens, representing moments of accomplishment and defeat in both enactments of the forensic. The prosecution or the defense is as victorious as are the finalists in speech and debate competition. At the same time, in their respective scenes/senses, they serve as representations of Austin's illocutionary speech act. The gavel makes a noise in the *Law and Order* episodes and in the "real" courtrooms to indicate that a judgment has indeed been rendered. Additionally, the act of writing about the gavels in their different contexts is my bodily and mental contribution to Pollock's call for us to make history go. As I left the museum, I pondered what else I could have experienced had I not been looking for something so specific. However, even with a clear goal in mind, I believe that this experience served to further my interest in the past, and (re)writing the past. Clearly, the Rural Life Museum webpage does not in any way prepare the critical eye for what he or she will observe during a visit. This entire experience serves as support that, indeed, the past is at work in the present.

Impacts

(Or, a cost/benefit analysis of the status quo and a proposed plan)

Costs

"Carrying his own cross, He went out to the place of the Skull . . . Here they crucified Him, and with Him two others—one on each side and Jesus in the middle. Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." (John 19:17-19, New International Version) The cross was heavier than anything anyone I know has ever carried. It pressed deeply into the tissues of His shoulders; it was as heavy

as sin, as heavy as the sin of all who ever did, do, and will live on this earth. Christ's human self bore the weight of the cross while His God self bore the weight of the world's sin. The part of Him which was human, I imagine, gave up long before he reached the crest of that mountain. The blood in His veins was replaced with spirit; His human heart burst and the Father sent the Holy Spirit to reside there to get Him through the trauma; a choice open to each of us. "[M]y Jesus bled and died. He spent His time with thieves and liars. He loved the poor and accosted the arrogant." (Agnew, 2005, My Jesus)

"Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. When He had received the drink, Jesus said, 'It is finished.' With that, He bowed His Head and gave up His spirit. Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. But when they came to Jesus and found that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water." (John 19:28-34, New International Version) NCCFI was created with the intention of being a national tournament refuge for students of Christian colleges and universities to avoid inappropriate verbiage and behavior. "Pretty blue eyes and curly brown hair and a clear complexion is how you see Him as He dies for your sins, but the Word says He was battered and scarred. Or did you miss that part? Sometimes I doubt we'd recognize Him." (Agnew, 2005, My Jesus) However, similar to many top-down approaches to keep the secular separate from the sacred, NCCFI/NCCFA seems to be placing discipline above doctrine, perpetuating the frustrating accusations of hypocrisy which come from both the outside and the inside. In the words of a former NCCFI competitor:

> I attended NCCFI twice . . . I've always thought of the tournament as a joke . . . I know the original intent of the tournament was to create a safe environment for Christian schools to be able to gather and not be criticized by the often liberal bias of the rest of the forensics community, but the great irony is that it behaves in the same fashion, only instead it functions from the far right as opposed to the far left. Regardless, this oppression and bias is just as prevalent if not more abundant within this community and at this specific tournament.

Clearly, NCCFI has buckled and broken under the weight of its cross. For some reason, the tournament is identical to all other tournaments in the sense that it ranks and rates performances and debates, as well as awards trophies. "Which Jesus do you follow? Which Jesus do you serve? If Ephesians says to imitate Christ, then why do you look so much like the world?"

(Agnew, 2005, My Jesus) The tournament's only clear separation is that it is more exclusive and judgmental than any other tournament. Another former NCCFI competitor commented:

> NCCFI . . .was the only tournament where I could count on people being the meanest and rudest, both critics and fellow participants. I would rarely win at that tournament because I didn't wear a bow in my hair, lay on a fake smile or generally be a 'cute girl' debater as I felt most critics wanted Christian girls to be. At a tournament that was supposed to be a safe space for believers I never felt more ostracized . . . I usually just had fun at those tournaments because if I took it seriously I would be depressed.

Jesus came from heaven to earth to live the flawless, righteous life that no human was, is, or will be able to achieve. What many Christians forget is that Jesus surrounded Himself with those who both needed Him and were willing to listen to Him. This included sinners of all sorts: those who disgraced their families, their bodies, and their minds. This excluded those who were so clean and righteous that they simply could not associate with Someone who was dirty and so indiscriminant that He would hang out with people who belonged in the gutter. "[M]y Jesus would never be accepted in my church. The blood and dirt on His feet would stain the carpet, but He reaches for the hurting and despised the proud . . . I know that He can hear me if I cry out loud." (Agnew, 2005, My Jesus) NCCFI/NCCFA is in the midst of its own, self-imposed crucifixion. We have conflated religiosity and faith. The instituted body of the members of NCCFI/NCCFA are privileged over the corporeal bodies which God made for them to dwell in throughout their lives. Like other organizations, especially forensic organizations, NCCFA strives to discipline the body of each of its members. This discipline shifts those members from the needs of their corporeal bodies to the needs and requirements of the institution. The institution contains our body by placing expectations on the body in order to discipline it; bodily needs are neglected, and the body's needs and desires equal sin.

Jesus is the ultimate sacrament, which is symbolically (or literally, depending on the denomination) ingested by the "body" of Christ, Christians. NCCFI/NCCFA is not following the spirit of this sacrament. Instead, the body of NCCFI/NCCFA has become diametrically opposed to the body of Christ, and is therefore breaking/broken down. It is not the individuals who are the problem, necessarily. In fact, most individuals I have communicated with are in agreement that there are problems with NCCFI/NCCFA. I do not have all of the answers, and I do not know all of the hearts or intentions of each individual who belongs to NCCFA. However, on the aggregate level, the NCCFI/NCCFA is in trouble. It is the organization that needs help. The individuals, I have no doubt, will continually work to improve the organization. The only remedy is a resurrection, which is impossible without the help of Jesus, the only body who has actually gone through this process. The Christian body who does follow Christ does not buckle under the weight of

the cross, because the Christian body allows Christ's body to carry the weight of the cross, as intended by God.

Benefits

There are times when I question whether I have already made my ultimate contribution to the world of forensics, and the world as a whole. NCCFI 2003 brought me the most joy of any tournament I have experienced. I rode the high of those results for years. In fact, the evidence of my pen plaques sitting in my office years later are perhaps proof that I am still riding that high. The official narrative of NCCFI/NCCFA seems to get lost in the shuffle when people discuss the tournament, because secular interpretations seem to become the predominant description. "Genealogies of performance also attend to 'counter-memories,' or the disparities between history as it is discursively transmitted and memory as it is publicly enacted by the bodies that bear its consequences." (Roach, 1996, p. 26) Some who participate at NCCFI seem to agree with counter-narratives, which make the original, or at least intended official narrative the least known. The intention of NCCFI/NCCFA was to make a tournament that glorified God by disallowing secular behaviors such as cursing, smoking, drinking, dancing, and sex in speeches, debates, and performances. While overall, I think that the tournament is rewarding the "Christian" or G-rated speeches the most, I have experienced the tournament rewarding questionable (according to NCCFI/NCCFA standards) behaviors.

Most national forensic tournaments make a big deal about the postings (lists of who made it) for finals. The 2003 NCCFI tournament was no exception. When breaks (who made it past the preliminary rounds) were posted, they were written in huge letters on large pieces of butcher paper. I saw my name on five of the seven possible sheets of paper. (I had entered a total of seven events, which was the maximum the tournament would allow. As it turns out, not long before this tournament occurred, my Christian Life class professor had taught us that seven is a Holy number.) This repetition of my name excited me to no end, of course, not only because I love my name, and not only because I love forensics, but also the aggregate level of the combination, which is truly euphoric. I suppose that this indicates that I support the foundational narrative of NCCFI/NCCFA and forensics as a whole, to a certain extent. The first event I proceeded toward was informative speaking; a speech that I always had a hard time getting energized about. In the same round I had duo though, which I was much more excited about. So, I spoke first in informative.

"After the loss of her husband to lung cancer, and her own diagnosis of emphysema at the age of 32, one would think that Michele Adkins, mother of three, would find giving up smoking an easy choice to make. Unfortunately, not so . . ." (Swift, 2002) I soon made one error, which led to two, three four, and finally found myself giving the worst rendition of that particular informative speech that I had ever given. It was Mason Davis who later told me that I set the tone for the entire round which turned out to be utterly

disastrous. Though I seemingly sacrificed my performance in informative, I was ready to triumph with my partner in duo. I had a strategy. I would make sure that we went last. So, I left the informative room, and instead of going directly to the duo room, which was only two or three doors down, I made a bee-line for my car, drove off campus, and smoked a cigarette. Because this was Christian Nationals and Point Loma Nazarene University, there was to be no smoking on campus. I was following the explicit rules of the campus, but the implicit norms of NCCFI/NCCFA indicate that the members of NCCFI/NCCFA should not smoke. I took long enough so that there would only be 10 minutes left in the duo round, so that Shauntè and I would definitely go last. It was sunny, which is characteristic of San Diego, but the wind chilled my legs uncomfortably, which is also characteristic of San Diego.

When I arrived in the duo room, there was only one duo left before ours: Wayne and Christy. Their duo was tailored perfectly for the Christian Nationals, and had beaten ours at district qualifiers just a week previously. It was a modern-day telling of Noah's Ark, and hilarious at that. I cannot remember anything else about it, except that I thoroughly enjoyed and simultaneously feared it. When they finished, Shauntè and I took center stage in the over-packed room. We recited the words of Bailey and Temple (1996) for our large audience, complemented by our carefully rehearsed blocking (choreography). "In every instance, the epic theatre is meant for the actors as much as for the spectators." (Benjamin, 1969, p. 152) Shauntè and I definitely had an agenda. This duo was about making our point regarding racism as much as it was for the education and enjoyment of the audience. Me: "Pretend you don't see Wanda-Sue. I'm not supposed to see her anymore . . ." Shauntè: "Can I play? . . ." Me: " . . nigger, nigger, nigger . . . Mama says: Remember: nice little girls keep their gloves on. Nice little girls keep their gloves white . . ." And we went on to perform perhaps the most shocking duo that the NCCFI has ever seen. I had the pleasure of portraying the pretty racist bigot, the image of which Christians constantly fight to separate themselves from. Later at awards, when those in charge announced the duo results, Shauntè and I were pleasantly surprised to win the event. We embraced each other and literally cried! I think we deserved it; others disagree. Either way, with my "civil disobedience" of smoking just long enough to gain a possible competitive advantage and our shocking lines, (I think the n-word ought to be considered much worse than the f-word that NCCFI judges and competitors fear) it does seem that transgressions were (un)intentionally rewarded. Soon after the ceremony I was back in my car, smoking cigarettes. I wondered silently what, if anything at all, Jesus would have to say about the results.

Plan

Clearly, the way in which NCCFI/NCCFA is currently operating is in dire need of repair. "The body is the inscribed surface of events (traced by language and dissolved by ideas), the locus of a dissociated Self (adopting the illusion of a substantial unity), and a volume in perpetual disintegration." (Foucault, 1977, p. 148) Our NCCFI/NCCFA bodies are marked with the

traditions we embraced and continue to inscribe on our selves and on others. We engage in the most traditional of elocution still practiced in the present. "And it helps to mark the distance from the elocutionary 'sacred' to the elocutionary 'profane.'" (Edwards, 1999, p. 25) Our mark from the sacred to the profane is quite shallow. We mark cursing as profane and references to Jesus as sacred, without much other consideration of context or content. As Christians, the obvious plan would involve calling upon God to help us to fix this; to return NCCFI/NCCFA to its intended purpose. I do not deny that many NCCFI/NCCFA members—coaches and competitors alike—are still well intended, and many even act in a manner that Jesus is proud of. Nor do I claim to have the ultimate authority on any of this. However, at the very least, I do hope that my project will serve as a call for real change, theoretically and pragmatically.

Theoretically, I think that we ought to examine and re-examine the reasons for which we claim to need NCCFI/NCCFA. We may look to Burke for a clue to how this change may be structured. Throughout many of his works, Kenneth Burke pointed out a cycle, which I believe NCCFI/NCCFA is currently in the midst of. Whenever there is a hierarchy, which NCCFA (along with all other forensic organizations) is, the members will cycle through dominion, guilt, sacrifice, redemption (Burke, 1970). I think that NCCFA has established itself as a power, and that members have begun to dialogue about the organization. However, each member simply talking to another is not enough to get to redemption. As put by Burke (1967):

> A rhetorician, I take it, is like one voice in a dialogue. Put several such voices together, with each voicing its own special assertion, let them act upon one another in cooperative competition, and you get a dialectic that, properly developed, can lead to the views transcending the limitations of each. (p. 203)

The current project, like the voices of the members of NCCFA is not enough on its own. However, in tandem and through further exploration, the NCCFA can achieve a Burkean, and hopefully Christ-like redemption. "The religious metaphor explains why society is in a continuous state of enacting dramas. Because they are created by imperfect humans, social hierarchies always have flaws that lead to their rejection." (Samra, 1998, http://www.acjournal.org/holdings/vol1/iss3/burke/samra.html) Though based on supernatural premises, NCCFA is made up of natural humans, and will therefore always be imperfect. Hence, as put by Burke (1950):

> The basic question for those of us interested in social communication is not the discovery of drives nor the analysis of the individual psyche. The key to understanding one another is not in studying the ways in which we discharge feelings but in how we name them. Feeling becomes emotion because it can be communicated. How it is communicated determines whether we will act together in love, hatred or indifference. Thus, the proper study of motives is

not how we discharge feelings, but how we express them. (p. 5) The most interesting parts of the redemption cycle as it applies to NCCFI/NCCFA is the way in which changes are negotiated and communicated. Specifically, if we are truly intending a "safe" haven for Christian competitors we may want to reevaluate what that truly entails. If we advocate a bubble, separate from the rest of the world, we may need to remind ourselves of a few things. "God tests His servants with obedience. He deliberately places us in situations where the standards of religion and society would appear to justify our actions." (Bevere, 2004, p.46) NCCFI/NCCFA, I believe, is under a test from God. Should we succeed, we will emerge because of our faith, not because of our works. Christ told us that we are to live *in* the world, but not be *of* the world. The great commission instructs us to evangelize, and the only way that our lights shine brightest is when we are surrounded by darkness. "Legalistic people, like the Pharisees of Jesus' day, are tied up in their own works instead of the work of Jesus." (Meyer, 2004, p. 40) The way in which NCCFI/NCCFA is operating now is with a bunch of lights, all in the same, already well-lit room. Instead of being tied up in our own works, perhaps we can spread the word and the work of Jesus. Because we are to not be *of* the world, we may also want to question why it is that we, at NCCFI, just like secular tournaments, award trophies for worldly accomplishments. "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?" (Matthew 7:3, New International Version) I know; I am currently suffering from plankeye.

Pragmatically, we can (of course) pray. The more that we claim to involve God in our purpose and decisions, the more we should actually talk to Him. Because storing up our treasures on earth is not what we are called upon to do, perhaps we could run festival finals like Phi Rho Pi, so that there is no one winner. We could also donate some of the fees from the tournament to Christian Charities instead of handing out expensive trophies. In any case, I think that the tournament will benefit from long talks with God and each other. Continually contesting and being in conversation with the past is clearly advocated by Christians world wide. Our source of knowledge of God is His Word, which is the Bible, a historical document in more than one sense. There are historically accurate events documented by the Bible, but more importantly, the Bible serves as a culturally historical foundation for the beliefs that guide and govern Christianity today. The constant contestation of the Bible comes in the form of the variety of interpretations of the written text as well as the variety of interpretations of what those various texts are instructing us to do. "Interrogation of faith and learning is a two-way street.

Not only do we let our faith speak to our scholarship, we should also place our religious practice under the scrutiny of our academic discipline." (Griffin, 2004, p. 28) The tangible representations of this (re)contested history come in the form of denomination after denomination of the Christian Church. While many consider this a negative fragmentation of the Christian faith, it actually can be interpreted as a positive opportunity for NCCFI/NCCFA to provide a truly Christ-like environment for all of His children to serve Him from their own perspective/pew. "We are all supposed to do great things on earth" to further God's work (Wagner, 2003, p. 13). We can do so by reevaluating and reworking the national forensic tournament which bears Christ's name. This unification and coming together is what a (re)writing of the history of NCCFI/NCCFA, from all authors willing to participate, can ultimately accomplish. title. I sincerely appreciate that.

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Appendix A

The 10 Paragraph Kevin Jones History

In October of 1986, Dr. Kevin T. Jones, then Director of Forensics at Otterbein College in Columbus, Ohio, judged a final round of Duo at a tournament at Miami University, Ohio. One of the Duos was extremely sexually explicit, making both Dr. Jones and many members of the audience very uncomfortable. David Robey, Director of Forensics at Cedarville University, watched the round as Cedarville had one or two duos in that same final round. After the round, Dr. Robey approached Dr. Jones and asked him for his thoughts on the round. Dr. Jones expressed his frustration over the sexually explicit duo and the two coaches talked about how great it would be to be able to attend a tournament where they could engage in their craft that they loved yet not be exposed to material and presentations that they would not normally choose to expose themselves to.

Based upon that conversation, Dr. Jones had a vision and began dreaming about the creation of a National Christian forensics competition. However, since Dr. Jones did not teach at a Christian college at that time, the dream would have to remain just a dream for several years. In April of 1996, Dr. Jones judged a preliminary round of competition at the National Forensics Association national tournament with then Director of Forensics Cynthia Byelene at Malone College. Dr. Jones had just accepted a position to begin serving as the Director of Forensics at Azusa Pacific University starting in the fall of 1996. Knowing that Malone was a Christian college, Dr. Jones struck up a conversation with Professor Byelene and shared his dream of an all Christian college forensics tournament. Professor Byelene was very supportive and said that Malone would be very interested in being a part of such a contest. Based upon such positive support and after much prayer, Dr. Jones felt led by the Lord to move forward and give birth to the NCCFI.

Dr. Jones obtained a list of membership for the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) and sent out a letter of inquiry to see if there was support for such a national tournament. The response was moderately supportive. So, in November of 1996 at the National Communication Association annual convention in San Diego, California, a gathering was held of interested coaches. Around 6-8 coaches attended and driven by strong support promised from the five southern California CCCU schools (Biola, APU, Cal Baptist, Point Loma, and Vanguard) plans were made for the inaugural tournament to take place in the spring of 1998 at Azusa Pacific University. The tournament would be designed to allow participants in intercollegiate forensics to participate in their craft, free from offensive material and free to do material that might be penalized at mainstream tournaments because it was too "religious." Also, Dr. Jones was committed to keeping Novice and Open divisions separate and that the tournament would always strive to put "as many trophies in as many hands as possible!"

Dr. Jones contacted the CCCU and was able to convince the CCCU that they should financially support the NCCFI. Contacts at the CCCU connected Dr. Jones with Regent University who also agreed to provide financial assistance. Enough money was raised for the first tournament that no entry fees were charged. The CCCU provided partial financial support for the second tournament in 1999, but chose to discontinue their association the tournament after that year. Regent University has remained a strong friend to the NCCFI and has financially supported every tournament and has sent a representative to the tournament every year.

Using the CCCU mailing list as a guide, approximately 100 invitations were sent out in the fall of 1997 and on February 12-14, 1998 the first ever National Christian College Forensics Invitational was held at Azusa Pacific University. Twelve schools attended the inaugural event with Southwest Baptist University winning sweepstakes. (The founding schools being Northwest Christian College, California Baptist College, Bethel College, Malone College, Biola University, Southwest Baptist University, Azusa Pacific University, Evangel College, Seattle Pacific University, Point Loma Nazarene College, Southern California College, and Geneva College.) Twelve different Individual Events were offered – ten regular IE's and two new events. In keeping with the theme of the tournament, Dr. Jones created two new categories of competition – Oral Interpretation of Faith Literature and Religious Oratory. Religious Oratory was dropped after the first tournament, but the Oral Interpretation of Faith Literature has become a popular mainstay of the tournament.

In 1999, fourteen schools descended upon the APU campus for the second version of the tournament. For the 1999 tournament, the theme verse for the NCCFI was selected and has been a part of the NCCFI ever since. The verse is Colossians 4:6: "Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how to answer every person." This verse embodies the vision of those responsible for starting the tournament that through the NCCFI, believers will hone and develop their communication skills to better prepare them to share Christ with a world that needs to hear about him. With this vision, God has blessed the tournament as each year has found new schools attending the tournament and more than twenty schools now regularly attend the tournament every year.

Azusa Pacific University hosted the first five tournaments from 1998-2001. Dr. Jones, then Director of Forensics at APU, served as tournament host and Tournament Director for those first five years. In 2001 Dr. Jones retired from forensics and left APU to take a non-forensics position at a different university. A new host was needed and Biola University stepped in and hosted the Fifth Annual version of the tournament in 2002. Dr. Jones served as the Tournament Director while Biola University Director of Forensics, Erick Roebuck, served as the host. Point Loma Nazarene University volunteered to host the 2003 edition of the tournament. At the 2003 tournament coaches meeting, a bid to host the 2004 tournament at Cedarville University was accepted along with a proposal that the tournament begin alternating be-

tween the Midwest and the west coast. California Baptist University submitted a bid to host the 2005 tournament.

By the 2002 tournament, the NCCFI had become well established in the forensics community and Dr. Jones called for the creation of an executive committee to begin oversight of the tournament. Dr. Jones was elected as the President of the organization; Dr. Michael Dreher of Bethel College (MN) was elected as the Tournament Director. The United States was divided in to two districts using the Rocky Mountains as the dividing point and two districts were formed. Each district was permitted to elect two representatives to the Executive Committee. This new Executive Committee began oversight to the NCCFI for the 2002 edition of the tournament. At the 2002 tournament, a position of executive secretary/treasurer was created and added as an official Executive Committee position. At the 2004 tournament, Dr. Dreher developed and proposed a formal constitution for the coaches to approve as a governing tool for the tournament.

In May of 2003 with one year remaining on his term as president, the Lord called Dr. Jones to pursue other academic endeavors and he regretfully resigned from his position as president. After much prayer and thoughtful consideration, Dr. Renea Gernant of Concordia University (NE) agreed to step in and complete Dr. Jones' term as president. Dr. Gernant presided over the 2004 tournament.

The tournament has grown and matured as additional events have been added since the first tournament such as Programmed Oral Interp, Lincoln-Douglas debate and Reader's Theatre. The NCCFI has experienced many growing pains along the way as Satan never wants anything from the Lord to succeed. But through prayer and belief that God has always been at the helm, the NCCFI has survived and grown and matured. It is the hope of all involved in the creation, development, and execution of the tournament that God will bless it and allow it to flourish according to His will until the day of Christ's return.

Proverbs 29:18 instructs us that without a vision the people perish. God planted a vision in the mind of one of his servants for a Christian forensics event. In God's perfect time that event – the National Christian College Forensics Invitational – was born and is now a mainstay on the national forensics circuit. It is the prayer of those responsible for the leadership and guidance of the NCCFI that all who participate in the tournament will share in that original vision and experience God's blessings as they participate in an activity they love surrounded by people who share their commitment and love for the Lord. (A Brief History of NCCFI, 2004).

Appendix B

Participant Letter of Inquiry

Dear Fellow NCCFI Participant,

I am writing a paper about the National Christian Forensic Invitational Tournament, and I would love your input. The paper is a genealogy of NCCFI from the perspective of its participants. The study is a combination of texts with the goal of fulfilling Pollock's call to make history go and Levine's call for historians to write better historiographies. The central concern of this paper is not to tell the official narrative of the organization. Instead, it expands the narrative to include both archival and ephemeral texts to tell the history from below.

The National Christian College Forensic Invitational (NCCFI) was started in 1998 in reaction to the risqué norms that had become common place in intercollegiate forensics. Dr. Kevin Jones, in particular was horrified at a final round of duo interpretation in which one duo was sexually explicit. As a reaction to what he found appalling, Dr. Jones sent out feelers and when he became the director of forensics at Azuza Pacific University, he hosted the first ever NCCFI. The only writing available on the history of NCCFI is the 10 paragraph explanation on the NCCFI webpage (http://cas.bethel.edu/dept/comm/nccfi/history.html). This tournament has expanded the possibilities of success of Christian college competitors and (presumably) provided an opportunity for Christian competitors and coaches alike to enjoy forensic competition free of secular values held above Christian values. Hence, a genealogy of this tournament is warranted. The method for collecting this history includes accessing written accounts, pictures, my own memories, and the memories of others who were involved in NCCFI.

What I am asking you to do is to write a paragraph to a page about your own experience with NCCFI. Please include any positive, negative, or in between memories that you would like to be included in the paper. Also, because the paper will be shared with at least my class and at most with a communication conference or journal, please indicate whether you would like your name and/or school included, or if you would rather that I fabricate a name for you. A fake name would keep your identity completely confidential. Let me know if you need further information. I look forward to hearing from you. If you choose to participate in this project, I need your response by email no later than November 30, 2006. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Crystal Lane Swift
Director of Forensics
Doctoral Candidate
Rhetoric and Public Address
Communication Studies
Louisiana State University
crystallaneswift@hotmail.com

Location, Location, Location: Exploring the Educational Benefits of Local, Regional, and National Tournaments

Nichelle D. McNabb, Otterbein College
Kristi Gerding Scholten, Ferris State University

Abstract

Given the budget constraints that institutions of higher education are under, it is often necessary for forensics programs to make choices about the number and variety of tournaments they can afford to attend in a given year. We surveyed the forensics community regarding the benefits provided by travel to local, regional, and national tournaments. What we found, is that each of these types of tournaments offers participants a unique set of benefits. Therefore, a mix of the various types of tournaments appears to be most beneficial from a learning perspective.

Introduction

Colleges and universities face budget pressures and competing needs for financial resources. Stepp (1996) noted that with shrinking financial resources comes increasing budget pressure on debate and forensics programs. According to Derryberry (1991, p.19) as administrators "seek to fund existing programs and generate revenues for new and expanding curricula" forensics programs must continually guard against budget cuts. Numerous scholars have noted that Directors of Forensics are responsible for justifying their programs' continued existence (Hunt & Inch, 1993; Sellnow, 1994; Stepp & Thompson, 1988).

Forensics advocates often advance arguments that extol the benefits of the activity: (1) critical thinking skills (Hunt & Inch, 1993; Ziegelmueller, 1998), (2) research skills (Hunt & Inch, 1993), (3) oral communication skills (Hunt & Inch, 1993; Porter, 1990; Ziegelmueller, 1998), (4) self-assurance (Hunt & Inch, 1993), (5) time management skills (Porter, 1990); (6) argumentation and refutation skills (Hunt & Inch, 1993), and (7) students synthesize and use information from all of the disciplines they are studying (Porter, 1990). Alexander and Strickland (1980) argued, "Few people will question the societal benefits derived from the thousands of debaters who take their skills into the fields of law, business, governmental service, and teaching." (p.79) Allen, Berkowitz, Hunt, & Louden (1999) conducted a meta-analysis of research on the improvements in critical thinking that result from competitive forensics participation and reported, "This improvement in critical thinking was found to be more substantial than that derived from a classroom experience in public speaking or argumentation." (Allen, Trejo, Bartanen, Schroeder, & Ulrich, 2004, p.173)

Littlefield (1991) surveyed administrators to gain an understanding of the rationales for forensics programs that they find compelling. Littlefield found that the greatest benefit, according to administrators was enhanced student education (p.94). The second greatest benefit to administrators was perceived to be "enhanced recruitment of students for their institutions." (p.94) Other benefits to the institution that were noted included: (1) allowing students to apply theory and bring together the various aspects of a liberal arts education, (2) increasing retention and student satisfaction, and (3) institutional recognition and visibility. Alexander and Strickland (1980) also explained that a strong forensics program reflects well on the academic institution and "advertises" the quality of education students obtain there.

However, providing students with the educational benefits of forensics is a costly endeavor. Ziegelmueller (1998) noted that in 1990 the median budget for debate programs alone was $18,000. According to Hunt & Inch (1993) "The 1992 survey results showed the average budget increasing once again to $34,893." (p.21) In part, this is because the majority of forensics tournaments are on other campuses and require substantial travel (Alexander & Strickland, 1980). Ziegelmueller also noted that teams can attend more tournaments if they have larger budgets. However, if you are limited by budget, which tournaments should you go to, in order to reap the most educational rewards? We seem to know the benefits of participation in forensics generally. However, are there different benefits from local, regional, and national competition and what are the differences? Knowing these differences may make for more cost beneficial planning of the tournament schedule. These are the questions we set out to address.

Method

We designed a survey (Appendix One) and distributed it at the 2007 Pi Kappa Delta National Tournament at Central Michigan University, in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan and at the 2007 National Forensics Association's National Tournament at Berry College, in Rome, Georgia. Sixty-three surveys were completed. We asked a series of closed questions regarding demographic information in order to get a sense of respondents' attributes. Thirty-seven people (59%) said they came from institutions with 5,000 or fewer students, 5 (8%) were from schools with 5,000-10,000 students, 9 (14%) were from schools with 10,000-15,000 students, 9 (14%) from schools with 15,000-20,000 students, and 3 (5%) reported that their schools had over 20,000 students. Thirty (48%) of our respondents were from public colleges and universities and thirty-three (52%) were from private schools. We also asked students and coaches the average number of tournaments they attended during the year. One person (2%) said fewer than five tournaments, 22 (35%) said 5-10 tournaments, 21 (33%) said 10-15 tournaments, 15 (24%) said 15-20 tournaments, and four (6%) said over twenty tournaments. Finally, we asked respondents where they travel: No one responded that they competed in their state exclusively, 5 (8%) people said they travel primarily in the state but attend a few regional tournaments, 47 (75%) people said they travel regionally,

but attend a few larger national tournaments, and 11 (17%) respondents said they travel all over the nation.

We also included open-ended questions (Goetz & LeCompte, 1981) in our survey, designed to elicit detailed and specific feedback regarding what respondents perceive as the benefits of different types of tournaments. We then typed respondents' answers and began deductively analyzing the information by sorting responses into the themes we saw as emergent and engaging in discussion about how the themes related to one another (Frey, Botan, & Kreps, 2000; Goetz & LeCompte, 1981; LeCompte & Preissle, 1994). In what follows, we identify each of the themes we saw, offer examples of respondents' "local meanings" (LeCompte & Preissle, 1994) that support the themes, and discuss what we think the themes mean, based upon what respondents reported or left unstated. Even if a response was only provided three times, we regarded it as a theme because it was repeated, and because we had only sixty-three respondents.

In question number 11, we asked respondents what combination of tournament competition was most educational for a forensics program. The results are summarized below.

EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF TOURNAMENTS

Type of Schedule	Number of Responses
NATIONAL	28
REGIONAL	5
LOCAL	1
NATIONAL/REGIONAL	8
LOCAL/REGIONAL	0
NATIONAL/LOCAL	5
ALL (LOCAL/NATIONAL/ REGIONAL)	14
NO ANSWER	2

Twenty-eight respondents, or 44%, said that national tournaments were most educational. However, we found, perhaps not surprisingly, that students derive educational benefits from all kinds of travel and competition. After surveying the data we gathered, we concluded that limiting travel to any one kind of competition – local, regional, or national – results in both missed educational opportunities and missed personal and competitive growth. As previously indicated, in this article, we will elucidate the lessons that might be learned at different types of tournaments with an eye toward how this impacts budget and travel decisions.

Benefits of In-state Travel

The first primary section of this article will deal with the benefits of local or in-state competition. Questions 9 and 11 deal with the benefits of local or in-state tournaments. Question 11 asked which kind of tournament, local/state, regional or national was more *educational* and what these educational benefits were. Of course, respondents' answers to both questions often focused on the educational and other benefits that they receive from each kind of tournament, so we have decided to collapse the data from both of these questions and discuss them in tandem.

Respondents listed six in-state tournament benefits in the following areas: (1) local tournaments are usually more affordable; (2) they tend to encourage camaraderie among local schools; (3) inexperienced competitors are provided a nurturing environment; (4) because they are closer they take less travel time; (5) they allow for more competitive success which can encourage retention and self-confidence; and (6) local judging experiences can be more rewarding. We will begin by discussing the benefit of lower costs.

Lower Travel Costs

One benefit that is not surprising is that in-state tournaments help teams to reduce travel costs. Seventeen respondents (27%) listed saving money as a benefit of local competition. In order to attend tournaments, forensics programs must find a way to fund participation. We asked respondents what the program spends money on. They reported the following: 50 people (79%) said transportation and lodging, 47 respondents (75%) listed entry fees, 46 individuals (73%) reported food, 19 people (30%) said supplies,[1] and one person reported that their organization pays for membership fees. Additionally, some teams pay expenses that are related to travel, but not directly related to competition, such as museum tickets. All of these materials require money. Thus, the lower costs associated with driving a van less miles, over fewer days, spending less time in a hotel, etc., are truly an advantage to forensics programs because it allows Directors of Forensics to stretch the travel budget further. More students may get to compete more often. In addition to the benefits of more competition, students also enjoy the camaraderie of such competitions.

Camaraderie

At least sixteen respondents (25%) reported that camaraderie or building a sense of community was a real benefit to in-state competition. Respondents said that in-state competition offered the advantage of "bringing community together," "building a sense of community, interaction with old friends," and "getting to know students and coaches from your area." Based on our analysis of the comments people provided, we think this means a number of things. First, the fact that state tournaments are smaller and provide a

[1] Such supplies include: interp books, slicks, easels, visual display cases, paper, photocopies, books, debate tubs to hold evidence, file folders, legal pads, pens, timers, etc.

regular population of the same schools means that competitors see and compete with the same students more often. This means that they may develop closer bonds. One individual responded that a benefit of state competition is that students "get to know the debaters/competitors better." Another said that they establish "closer friendships." We believe that this is very much related to a second category of responses that we saw; opportunities for less experienced competitors.

Opportunities for Inexperienced

The familiarity and cordial environment offered by a local tournament may make it easier for students who lack competitive experience to feel like they can take the risks associated with competition. Beginning competitors may not compete out of a love for doing research and public speaking, but they may enjoy time spent with students from other schools. Moreover, the greater number of smaller local tournaments theoretically allows more students to experience competitive success. One respondent told us, "In-state competitions are of course generally smaller, sometimes this can hurt the level of competition, but also allows less experienced students to experience competitive success." Thus, it would seem that students need to experience some sense that they are good at the activity or have potential to be really good, in order to be motivated to invest the time and effort required to improve. Finally, even if local or in-state competition were not at the most intense level, beginning competitors may benefit from developing a general sense of how to do the activity.

Related to this point, eight respondents (12.7%) reported that a benefit of in-state competition is that it allows larger, more established programs to "give back" to smaller or newer teams. One individual stated that in-state travel, "allows larger programs to help grow smaller ones." Another said that state tournaments "help raise the level of competition." When programs are just starting to grow, recruit, and retain competitors another helpful benefit is the notion that local tournaments take less time away from students' and coaches' other activities.

Time

There seem to be two real benefits to the fact that local tournaments require less time of students; closer tournaments allow students to spend more time being students and less time being travel fatigued. First, forensics competitors are students. Moreover, they are often good students who care about their grades and hope to pursue graduate or legal study. Local travel allows students the opportunity to be in class more often and have less time away from campus, which may give them more time for study. Five respondents (8%) listed less time away from school as a benefit of in-state competition.

Second, yet very much related to time away from school, is the fact that students and coaches experience less travel fatigue on shorter trips. Twelve respondents (19%) said that in-state competition was "less tiring." Students can avoid missing classes if they are absent from school for shorter time periods and when they return from an hour and a half van ride, they re-

cover more quickly than they do from an eight or nine hour drive. This they can recover and get back to schoolwork more quickly. Addit long van trips with crowded conditions and independent minded peop different values, opinions, and needs, can create some conflict amon members (McNabb & Cabrera, 2006). Over the course of a year, pe ties of team members can create tension and reduce enthusiasm for tra subsequently speech and debate participation.

Coaches are often professors or graduate teaching assistan have research and teaching obligations when they return from tour travel. We feel that it is also a benefit to them when they have more devote to those pursuits or are able to recover more quickly from the w without sleep, with a great deal of driving, and with responsibility dents who are much younger and more energetic than them. Moreover ars (Dickmeyer, 2002; Gill, 1990; Littlefield & Sellnow, 1992) hav that burnout has an effect on the longevity of coaches, who unlike st do not graduate and end their participation at the end of four years. fore, if local tournaments ease the stress on coaches, we think there benefits associated with allowing coaches to remain engaged in the over a longer period of time. Not only do local tournaments present advantage, respondents also indicate that they allow for more success

Competitive Success

Three respondents (4.8%) listed winning more frequently as efit of in-state competition. We believe that competitive success is im to both students and to administrators who are asked to provide insti support for forensics programs. One coach stated, "Your institution see your state standing and this helps with funding." We find it su that more coaches did not list winning and the institutional support ass with it as a benefit. Students listed the following advantages associat winning: "recognition, trophies, State Titles." A coach reported t our state the competition level isn't very high, so my students win m that makes them happy." As stated earlier, a basic level of success ably needed in order to make the time commitment worthwhile for s Additionally, it seems that when we are recruiting at our respective tions, prospective students will ask us how good the team is. Thus, seems to have some potential recruiting advantages as well. We did it surprising, however, that both students and coaches recognized th tournaments create unique judging opportunities. We would now like to a discussion on the theme of judging benefits.

Judging

The final benefit of local travel, listed by three respondents was judging. Respondents said that, "We have the ability to respond back and then be reassessed by the 'same' judges," "having consiste ing standards," and "understanding the local judge." This would see to have a number of implications. First, as a judge sees the same c

cover more quickly than they do from an eight or nine hour drive. This means they can recover and get back to schoolwork more quickly. Additionally, long van trips with crowded conditions and independent minded people with different values, opinions, and needs, can create some conflict among team members (McNabb & Cabrera, 2006). Over the course of a year, personalities of team members can create tension and reduce enthusiasm for travel and subsequently speech and debate participation.

Coaches are often professors or graduate teaching assistants who have research and teaching obligations when they return from tournament travel. We feel that it is also a benefit to them when they have more time to devote to those pursuits or are able to recover more quickly from the weekend without sleep, with a great deal of driving, and with responsibility for students who are much younger and more energetic than them. Moreover, scholars (Dickmeyer, 2002; Gill, 1990; Littlefield & Sellnow, 1992) have noted that burnout has an effect on the longevity of coaches, who unlike students, do not graduate and end their participation at the end of four years. Therefore, if local tournaments ease the stress on coaches, we think there may be benefits associated with allowing coaches to remain engaged in the activity over a longer period of time. Not only do local tournaments present a time advantage, respondents also indicate that they allow for more success.

Competitive Success

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tors over time, she or he may note improvements or differences in competitors' style or strategies and may talk to students about those areas of change. Thus, students may get a sense of what strategies are effective and the judges may have a better sense of how to teach students something useful in their feedback because they know that student and his or her abilities. Getting regular and specific feedback regarding changes or additions from someone familiar with the student's work is almost like having another person sharing the coaching or mentoring role. However, this may imply or require that the judges whom students have on a regular basis are knowledgeable and/or competent. That is, getting more regular feedback that is uninformed by knowledge of argumentation theory, performance technique, etc., may not enhance students' knowledge much. Second, we think that having the same judges over time likely allows students a greater ability to formulate a sense of the judge's expectations and likes or dislikes, which makes it possible to adapt arguments and performance to that specific audience.

It seems to us, that it is possible that having the same judges over and over again is potentially both an advantage and a disadvantage. It is possible that students try harder or are more enthusiastic about having a judge they frequently have because they know how to adapt to his or her expectations. However, it is also possible that competitors respond to familiar judges with less enthusiasm. They might assume, for example, that a particular judge will "never" like their performance and fall into the trap of a self-fulfilling prophecy, ensuring that they receive a low rank. Conversely, a student may get over-confident if she or he feels that his or her judge "always" rates his or her performance well.

There is no doubt that local, in-state tournaments provide a myriad of benefits to both students and coaches alike. Many of these benefits and the shape that they take, such as time, cost, and judge familiarity in particular are unique to the localized tournament. However, there are also many important pieces of speech and debate education that cannot be achieved by local tournaments alone. We turn now to the benefits of regional and national competition.

Benefits of Regional/National Travel

Our survey had two questions that asked about the benefits of traveling to regional and national tournaments. In this section, we want to use the responses to questions 10 and 11. Question 10 asked students and coaches to comment on the perceived general benefits of regional and national (presumably larger, and, thus, more expensive) tournaments. Question 11 asked which kind of tournament, local/state, regional or national was more *educational* and what these educational benefits were.

In our analysis of the survey responses five themes emerged from the data. The educational benefits to national tournaments included: (1) national tournaments set the bar for competition; (2) they allow for more exposure to new and different ideas, styles, etc.; (3) they are more prestigious and, thus,

competitively rewarding; (4) they open students eyes' to possibilities before unknown, acting as a powerful motivation toward self-improvement; and finally, (5) they expose students to different judges and new critique. Before we discuss, however, we should mention that we collapsed the tournament types of regional and national. It seemed to us that people often collapsed regional and national tournaments together into one category that came to represent tournaments that were larger and not "local." We refer to these types of tournaments as national tournaments in this section. Respondents indicated very clearly (refer to the chart in the introduction) that they thought national tournaments to be the most educational. We now turn to a discussion of why national tournaments are educationally rewarding. The first of the emergent themes is that national tournaments "set the bar" for competition.

Setting the Bar

In the answers to question 10, respondents said that national tournaments offer "better competition" over thirty times (48%), making it the highest recurring response. What respondents meant by better competition was not always specified in their answers; however, when they were asked what tournaments they thought were the most educational and why, a notion of "better competition" begins to take shape. One respondent said, "You get to see the other schools and their styles. It also challenges you to work harder to be competitive." Another indicated, "There is better competition…the arguments are typically stronger." From these responses we get the sense that the larger tournaments set the bar for the season. Students learn from this better competition, "to adapt to the norms." "[National tournaments] give us a better picture/view of what's being done and accepted nationally." Students and coaches see "the best competition nationally," "the top levels of competition" which "force[s] you to work harder" in order to "increase success probability" and "reach a higher level." As one student put it, national tournaments offer "REAL competition and difficulty." These national tournaments set the stage for the season and prepare competitors for what norms and experiments in style and argumentation are going to pay off. "National tournaments allow us to size up the competition and learn from the best." These tournaments in essence, give students a level to strive for. "Watching good competitors really helps to become better because you can see what it takes to be successful." "The better competition is key to advancement to competing at the national level." Students get "a better feel for what people are running, talking about, etc." and thus, it translates into "better preparation for nationals." Of course this statement refers to the national tournament – typically the end and climax to the season. We will talk more about this climactic moment later, but for now it is important to note that coaches and students alike feel that national tournaments are "better" and "stronger" tournaments because they allow students to "see what others are doing" and, thus, see where the level of competition is. Students get a sense of what techniques are being accepted or rejected, and *what they should be striving for* in order to be considered a success. Closely related to the notion that national competitions are educational

because students learn where their competition stands and what level they themselves should strive for is being exposed to the new and different. Thus, let us now explore this theme in more depth.

Diversity

We found that exposure to new ideas was another emergent theme, being mentioned 30 times (slightly less than 48%). National tournaments set the bar *because* they expose the students to "new ideas," which is not just beneficial to students' success as competitors, but is educational in and of itself. First, it is beneficial because national tournaments allow students to expand their social network. Second, students and coaches experience personal growth through the cultural enrichment that travel to national tournaments often provides. Finally, students and coaches expand their horizons in relation to competitive events.

Social rewards. Often exposure to diversity is described as a "perk" or a "reward" socially. Many respondents mentioned that such interaction provides opportunities for friendships and, thus, networking. For example, one respondent stated, "I think you learn more. A person is able to watch many different styles and hear new topics and cases…It also helps socially because you meet people from all over the country." Another respondent indicated that traveling nationally, "builds national forensic community and develops professional contacts; it develops students' worldview, social skills and friendships." While the benefits of networking are not extolled in these answers, one can easily imagine potential social and career opportunities that might result. In our experiences, for example, mentorships are formed between experienced coaches and junior coaches; students talk to representatives about graduate schools and fellowship opportunities; and people write letters of recommendation for us when we apply to internships or employment.

Cultural enrichment. Traveling to national tournaments also provides "new experiences for the debaters, [they are] able to go places they may not otherwise see, meet people from other parts of the nation." These opportunities provide "personal growth," and "cultural and historical enrichment." "Gaining culture," is mentioned in several responses; "new places and more experiences" increase our exposure to and awareness of "cultural differences" among regions of the U.S. We know from our own experiences the types of historical and cultural enrichment that traveling around the nation provides. When we traveled to Rome, Georgia for the 2007 National Forensic Association national final tournament we visited the Trail of Tears Museum. This historical site held artifacts, accounts, and visual recreations of the experiences of Native Americans in the early years of our Nation's conception. You can read about such experiences, but reading about it does not affect you in the same way that seeing physical representations of those experiences can.

Competitive style. Finally, traveling regionally and nationally gives students a "chance to see other regional styles." One respondent stated, "Experienced debaters get exposed to broader range of competition and reach a

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Two other respondents echoed the notion that "it is harder to compete if y are from a small school rather than a larger one" sentiment.

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was more "traditional" and less likely to break the rules. It seems that the differences in individual events techniques, at least by region, are not that significant. That is, the same techniques and strategies are generally employed across the nation. However, we did find some evidence to suggest that people do perceive some stylistic differences. We think that in future research we might ask questions about perceived differences in style according to school size rather than region. This type of questioning may result in more vivid and specific responses. However, the response to our question about perceived differences in debate practice among regions was vivid and specific.

Debate. In our question about stylistic differences in debate, 5 regional categories emerged: Midwest, East, Northeast, West, and South. These regions weren't directly specified by the language of the question, instead these are the regions that respondents themselves designated as having differences. Forty-two respondents indicated distinct differences among regions (67%); 13 people (21%) didn't answer the question at all; 4 respondents (6%) said that there were differences, but didn't specify those differences according to region; and the same number of respondents (4) said that there were no regional differences at all. The following information charts the stated differences in debate among region and indicates the number of respondents that mentioned each difference:

Midwest	West
Increased speed (5)	Increased speed (5)
Emphasis on research and evidence (4)	Less stock issues oriented (3)
Focus on procedural arguments (4)	
Focus on a policy framework (3)	
East	Northeast
Focus on persuading the audience (5)	More focus on delivery (3)
Focus on delivery (5)	Less focus on the flow (2)
South	
Increased Speed (2)	

We admit that this data is incomplete and limited. We would like to expand upon this inquiry in future research to get a richer and more specific understanding of these stylistic differences. Further, we are not sure how respondents are designating these regions – which states/schools they are considering as part of the Midwest, West, etc. something else to address in future research. However, this data does back up the claim that different regions are perceived as having different styles and different strengths, at least in debate.

As this research indicates, national competitions are valuable "because the best competitors around the country are gathered and there are more

ideas and people to learn from and to use to progress." It is an educational experience to be exposed to different styles and learn about them, expanding your horizons. It is also competitively beneficial to be exposed to a diversity of styles, because if you are exposed to different styles and you experience competitive success – that success is given a higher level of prestige. This is the third theme that emerged from the data and we will now turn to its discussion.

Prestige

The data doesn't represent the theme of prestige as strongly as others (7 respondents, 11%), but it is worth discussing because it points to an interesting phenomenon in the world of speech and debate. One of the reasons why national tournaments offer "better competitions," is the notion that they are more competitively rewarding because they are more prestigious than smaller, "local" tournaments. Prestige is directly mentioned a handful of times (4 respondents); for example, one respondent stated "traveling on a regional and national level increases the level of competition and prestige." Another stated, "Students prepare harder for national competition because of the prestige." It also seems to us to be hidden in several responses. Responses that discuss national tournaments as "preparation for THE nationals" are such responses. Comments that indicate that "better competitions are more rewarding" are also such responses. Respondents also mention that such tournaments offer "more recognition," "better exposure," and make you "more competitive" on the circuit – these kinds of comments hint at the higher levels of prestige that are afforded by more national tournaments. There is at least one theme that emerged from our data that would add credence to this notion that we place national tournaments on a pedestal. This is the theme of self-motivation.

Motivation

Responses indicate that national tournaments encourage a level of activity and self-motivation that other kinds of speech and debate events do not (11 respondents, 17%). Sometimes responses tie this motivation to the prestige of national tournaments. At other times, however, the data indicates that the simple exposure to the realm of possibility inspires self improvement. A metaphor that clarifies our meaning here compare a small, poor, high school theater production and a production on Broadway. In the first instance, some brilliant things might occur, but if the students were never exposed to a Broadway production they might not ever realize what theater productions *could be* like. In the second instance, the chances of inspiring excitement and awe are greatly increased. The same kind of thing seems to occur when we compare "local" tournaments to "national" tournaments. When you get "exposure to events your school may not know much about," possibilities open up to you. "Better exposure for students and program" translates into "new techniques and methods" and "more excitement" about such techniques and methods. One student directly indicates the importance of exposure to self-improvement:

> I like regional and national competition because it allows for more schools to see how big teams debate and different methods they use, with national and regional debates your understanding of how debate works increases; because the West, East, North, etc. all have different styles.

It is perhaps important that we also indicate what the student didn't say in this response. Whereas elsewhere exposure is linked to competitive success, it is not so here. Instead, it seems to us that the student appreciates the educational benefits of national tournaments because of the personal growth they allow. Other students indicate that such tournaments just inspire them to "work harder" because they are exposed to "new" ideas – events and techniques that they didn't know of before. It is as if such exposure encourages students to push themselves; in essence to compete with themselves and see how good they can be, whether or not they win a national title.

Many respondents indicated that exposure to new ideas and techniques were especially important for novices to learn and grow. For example, one respondent stated that "traveling on a regional and national level…creates opportunities for novice schools to see the best competition." Another commented that novices get a "broader range of styles and ideas [which give] a national perspective on how speech and debate is done." The final theme we uncovered concerns exposure to diversity as well. However, this theme ties the educational benefits of exposure to the necessity to adapt to a wider diversity of judges.

Judging Diversity

Respondents indicated that national tournaments were important because students were exposed to a wider diversity of judges at such tournaments (11 respondents, 17%). Students "develop different skills by interacting with judges and competitors they don't see regularly." We learn new and different things from judges at national tournaments: "Different judges can provide new insight on a speech or case." Some judges are just better at writing ballots than others; "Judges who do not normally judge you have a clean slate and are able to have a more unbiased opinion." Because national tournaments offer "better competition" you get "more judge variability which equals more criticism and corrections" than you might otherwise have. The most succinct response in this category reads:

> A variety of perspectives allows for many different types of reactions to and comments on speeches. Especially in debate events, students are forced to engage in audience analysis and adapt, which is one of the most valuable skills that competitors can gain.

National tournaments expose competitors to a wider variety of judges. As the data indicates, not only does this mean that they might get a wider variety of feedback to help them learn and grow, it also provides more opportunity to practice adaptation skills than smaller, more local tournaments. Furthermore, while not directly mentioned in the data, we know from our

own experiences that national tournaments provide more chances to interact with "the big dogs" of scholarship. Students might actually get to meet the author of their public speaking textbook, or the person who wrote the article they just read on debate theory. Increasing the opportunity for everyone to ask direct questions of the scholarship they follow is highly educational and we would argue that the potential for such interactions is an advantage for the category of national tournaments.

Discussion

Now that we have talked about the specific findings and what we think they mean, we would like to take a step back and consider: (1) The answers to our research questions; (2) the similarities and differences in the benefits of local/state tournaments versus regional/national tournaments; (3) the findings in relation to research regarding administrators' needs; (4) the study's limitations, and (5) avenues for future research in this area. Additionally throughout this discussion, we will make note of those findings that surprised us.

Answering our Research Questions

At the outset of this study we asked two main research questions:

RQ1: Which tournament should coaches on a limited budget choose in order to reap the greatest educational rewards?

RQ2: Are there different benefits from local, regional, and national competition and what are the differences?

We would like to reiterate that each kind of tournament seems to us, to offer educational benefits, and consequently, limiting travel to just one form will result in missed educational and social benefits for one's students. Thus, we would advise that coaches attend local tournaments, which build camaraderie, nurture inexperienced competitors, offer them competitive success, save money, and expose students to judges who may see them often. At the same time, however, it seems that students need to see the best competition in the nation in order to open their eyes to different events and stylistic potentialities and to be motivated to work toward improvement. Thus, in allocating resources, it might be less important to get novice students to *frequent* national level tournaments than it is to get more experienced students who might thrive on the challenge and prestige of competing against the nation's best. That said, what are the similarities and differences between local, regional, and national competition?

It was surprising to us, how seldom benefits of local travel overlapped with the benefits of regional or national travel. A benefit that seems relatively consistent across the various kinds of tournaments is that camaraderie exists among members of the community. At the state level, respondents reported "bringing community together," and "building a sense of community, interaction with old friends." Larger tournaments, however, offered social rewards such as, "builds national forensic community and develops profes-

sional contacts." Students who were undergraduate competitors often serve as graduate assistants in programs in other states, finish graduate school, and go on to become directors. Thus, chances are when community members travel nationally; they run into old teammates, people they once coached, former office mates, etc. Thus, while there is a local community that emerges from the same set of people interacting on a regular basis, there is also a sense of community at the national level. This is consistent with Littlefield's (1991) argument that administrators think participation in forensics increases student retention. Since students feel like they belong to a community where there is camaraderie, retention efforts are likely enhanced by competition at both local and national levels. Students also listed winning as a benefit of participation in both smaller/more local and larger/more national tournaments. They want to be able to experience success, and like local tournaments for that very opportunity. At the same time it seems to mean more, that is, to be more prestigious to win at larger/more national tournaments.

Respondents also noted advantages of having local and national judges. However, the benefits seem very distinct to us. At the local level judges who may have more frequent opportunities to watch students over time may also have a greater ability to note and to influence students' learning. However, having judges from across the nation allows students to interact with judges who have more diverse ideas about theory, strategy, and style. Moreover, we believe that a more diverse judging pool means that students get to interact with scholars who are both coaching and actively pursuing research in ideas related to forensics. Being able to learn from someone who just researched counterplan theory and has really innovative ideas offers unique education. In speech, performing a rhetorical criticism/communication analysis in front of a well-known scholar of your methodology offers an intimidating, but undoubtedly educational experience.

The distinct advantages offered by in-state, or local competition, are: (1) affordability; (2) a nurturing environment for inexperienced competitors; (3) less travel time; and (4) more competitive success. The distinct advantages of national tournaments appear to be: (1) setting the bar for what constitutes an excellent performance; (2) exposure to more diverse styles (e.g. ideas about theory, specific arguments, performance techniques, etc.); (3) more prestige from doing well at a tournament; and (4) opening students' eyes to new possibilities regarding their performance.

Littlefield (1991) argued that administrators felt like forensics competition enhanced recruiting ability. According to Alexander and Strickland (1980) having a strong forensics program "advertises" the quality of education available at the institution. As noted earlier, we were surprised that more respondents did not list impressing administrators as a benefit of competition and of winning. It also seems to us, that larger tournaments offer a greater "prestige" benefit to both the team and the institution. While administrators certainly like to see that their team is fairing well against other state institutions, it is also likely impressive when they can list well known educationally excellent schools that students have an opportunity to compete against and to defeat.

Finally, we were surprised that most of our respondents did not indicate (1) that there were regional differences in individual events and (2) did not specify what those differences were. It is possible that most of our respondents were debaters. It is also possible, that when competitors write, rehearse, and memorize speeches or carefully craft interpretation of literature to be performed throughout the season it limits their ability to adapt performances as much as they could in limited preparation and debate events. Of course, the responses, or lack thereof, regarding stylistic differences in individual events may be due to a limitation of our study. We explore this issue and other potential hindering factors next.

Limitations

There are some limitations to this study, and most of these have to do with the wording of our survey questions. Of course all surveys are limited in the type of information that they can render. Respondents skip questions they feel are too lengthy or complicated; they use abbreviations and shorthand that researchers may not recognize; they may not express the full extent of their ideas or feelings on a particular issue. We know that all of this occurred in our study. In fact, one respondent stated, "this is too long of a question to answer." However, there are a few limitations, more specific to our language use, that we would like to address: first, a couple of our questions were worded too similarly, second, we did not clearly indicate what we meant by local, regional, and national tournaments, and finally, we did not specify particular individual events and/or types of debate in our questions regarding stylistic differences.

Question similarity

We asked respondents what they felt were the "benefits" of both in state competitions and regional or national competitions in questions 9 and 10. Then, in question 11 we asked "What would you say is more educational, local, regional, or national tournaments? Why? What educational benefits do you feel your team derives from each? Essentially question 11 is partly a repeat of questions 9 and 10. Our answers reflected this. That is, we got the same kind of information from each question, rather than unique answers. Further, this may have contributed to respondent fatigue and, thus, contributed to blank and/or shorter answers. On the one hand, we wonder if asking the same question more than once assured that we got rich data. On the other hand, we feel relatively confident that we could have gotten the same information, and saved our respondents some time and fatigue by fewer, more direct questions.

Defining tournament boundaries

When we began the process of interpreting the data, we realized that many respondents defined local, regional, and national differently and/or that they may not have a clear boundary between these types of tournaments. This resulted, for example, in the collapse of regional and national as one category

On the one hand, we like the idea of letting this definition emerge – seeing the local meanings of these terms, because we do feel that size or geographical location may not quite capture the story. On the other hand, because we didn't specify the definitions of these tournaments, we tended to get answers about the "extremes" and not about the middle. It is conceivable that there is a middle ground between local and national tournaments (as they emerged from our study). It is also conceivable that this middle ground has some distinct benefits. Asking respondents to think about other types of tournaments in-the-abstract, while competing at a national tournament that constitutes a culmination of their competitive season might have caused respondents to answer our questions in a somewhat distracted way.

Questions about style

Similar to the explanation regarding defining the different types of tournament that we focused on in our survey questions, we feel that our questions regarding differences in regional styles was limited due to a lack of specificity in our language. First, it may have been beneficial to actually draw geographical boundaries for this question; to define what constitutes the Midwest, etc. This would only have given us more detailed information. Further, we didn't ask about specific events (limited preparation, public speaking, interpretation) or styles of debate (parliamentary, Lincoln-Douglas). This could have been part of the reason why we got vague, incomplete answers to the question regarding individual events, and, again, would have only made the information regarding debate richer. Individual events encompass so many different kinds of events, and because we lumped them together in a general category, it may have resulted in more general answers. Of course, there may just not be that many regional differences in individual events as there are in debate. It is too hard to determine based on this data alone. That is why we think that this particular area is ripe with potential for future research.

Future Research

When looking back upon our data and our conclusions, we find three areas interesting to pursue for future research: (1) studying educational benefits according to other variables, (2) the development of a NATIONAL TOURNAMENT fantasy, and (3) the differences in regional style just mentioned above. Each of these areas can be pursued by further research.

First, we think it might add to the data regarding educational benefits if those benefits were analyzed according to size, budget, or even type of school. That is, if you are from a large, state school do you seek out and absorb different educational benefits than a private school or a school with a smaller budget? It might also be interesting to examine the different types of schools' educational *goals*, as these might directly determine the types of benefits that they seek out. The type of school you attend undoubtedly gives you a lens through which you view forensic activity; a lens which influences how you interpret such things as educational benefits. Uncovering these distinctions, if they do exist, would be beneficial for helping to point out hidden

assumptions about forensic activity and education as well as making better matches between type of tournament and a team's particular goals.

Second, it seems to us that the theme of prestige points to a fantasy that is spun about and around the national tournament. We do not mean to assign an attitude to this fantasy – that is, we are not yet trying to judge whether it is a good or a bad thing. We use the term fantasy to refer to a narrative, not always rooted in reality, which tells a story about person, places, and events. The rich arena of narrative theory tells us that such stories form a part of and impact a group's sense of themselves.[2] As any reader knows, stories have heroes and villains, climactic moments, and usually a moral. We get a sense from the data that there is an importance placed upon national tournaments and a great importance placed on THE national tournament (whichever your affiliation). There is a sense that THE national tournament should be seen as the climax of the season and that our work throughout the season should always be done with that goal in mind. To do well, that is, be competitive at the more prestigious tournaments (national tournaments) acts like a pre-test for THE national tournament. There is a sense that this tournament is the end-all, be-all – we give it great importance and, thus, make it out to be extremely difficult (giving it more prestige). Certainly, it is this way in the minds of some administrators who view national awards or awards from prestigious schools as markers for success. Thus, success at national tournaments tends to be helpful to any program.

The national tournament fantasy would be worth exploring in future research in order to uncover its truths and myths. Similar to the notion that "local" tournaments can be "national" tournaments is the notion that THE national tournament might not really be that competitive (or at least not as difficult or prestigious or rewarding, etc.) as people make it out to be. For example, it is conceivable that a smaller, more local tournament might actually be *harder* than a national tournament; the competition might be more concentrated, for instance. This may seem like blasphemy and perhaps it is – again, we do not mean to draw conclusions regarding this phenomenon here, we do not have enough data for that. We only want to point out that it might be an interesting topic to pursue in future research. Such an exploration may point out some hidden assumptions about what is educational, what is beneficial, what types of things coaches should consider as goals for students, and how they cultivate notions of success for students. This type of inquiry may particularly impact one of the focal points of this research; whether smaller schools who may not have the money to travel to national tournaments can achieve the same benefits as larger schools with a bigger travel budget.

Finally, as we have alluded to, we think that we could get richer data regarding the stylistic differences among regions in both individual events and debate. Expanding upon the questions we asked here, more clearly de-

2 Walter Fisher (1984, 1985, 1989) provides a useful starting place for thinking about and examining narrative as theory and methodology.

fining regional boundaries, and asking about both specific types of individual events and types of debate would all help to increase our understanding of perceived stylistic differences. Further, as some of our respondents indicated, there may be some stylistic differences based on size of school or history of success. Do schools with a history of success (however that is defined) "get away" with more "rule bending"? Responses seemed to indicate general differences between regional styles of limited preparation events; are there such differences, and what are they? These and other questions would be worth pursuing because (a) they may point to a sort of "glass ceiling" or wall-of-snobbery that smaller, more novice teams battle against—rightly or wrongly; and (b) gaining an understanding of stylistic differences helps us prepare ourselves. Not only can we have a better idea of what to expect and how to adapt when traveling to different types of tournament (e.g. how judges from different regions define an effective performance), but we can also realize the things that we might learn from different regional/school styles.

In conclusion, we feel that this study has been fruitful in many ways. Not only do we have a myriad of interesting directions to pursue for future research, we also have a better grasp of the types of lessons that can be learned during different types of travel. Self-assurance, for example, which is one of the extolled benefits of forensic activity (Hunt & Inch, 1993) can be more easily found at local tournaments. However, it will mean more and, thus, stick with a student longer if it is found at a national tournament. Whereas, if one wants to become better at oral communication skills (another benefit advanced by Hunt & Inch, 1993) they might think about looking at debaters from the Northeast and East. We think that coaches can use the information we have uncovered to design a tournament schedule that will maximize the educational benefits that they desire for their team. In the end, we recognize that team budgets will always put pressure on us and may force us to travel more locally. However, for the most well-rounded and educational experience a team has to try to incorporate both local and more national travel; for each type of tournament offers benefits that the others cannot duplicate.

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Appendix 1

Speech and Debate Program Profile

If you have time, we would appreciate your filling out this short survey that has to do with assets, management, and stylistic differences among different forensics programs. While this is a completely voluntary survey, the information could help in knowing the trends in college forensics as well as what is working in the area. Please also be assured that you need not supply any sort of identifying information, so your answers will be completely anonymous.

Again, thank you for your time.

1. Which of the following best describe your school's population of students?
    a. 5,000 or less
    b. 5,000-10,000
    c. 10,000-15,000
    d. 15,000-20,000
    e. over 20,000

2. Which of the following best describes your academic institution?
    a. public
    b. private

3. Do you have graduate students who help coach and travel? If so, how many?

4. What do you estimate is your yearly budget, including any separate funds you might receive for Nationals or other purposes?

5. What does the school's/team's budget pay for, in terms of competition needs?

6. Does your school do fund raisers? If so, what do you do and how much do you generally earn?

7. How many tournaments do you attend each year, on average?

8. Which of the following best describes your team's travel patterns?
    a. We never leave the state where our school is located.
    b. We attend mostly in state tournaments, but travel to a few regional tournaments each year?
    c. We travel regionally and attend a few larger national tournaments each year.
    d. We travel all over the nation.

9. What do you feel are the benefits of in state competitions?

10. What do you feel are the benefits to traveling regionally and nationally?

11. Which would you say is more educational, local, regional, or national tournaments? Why? What educational benefits do you feel your team derives from each?

We are trying to get a sense of the competitive norms of various regions (Midwest, East, South, and West) and the expectations regarding what constitutes a good performance. So, when answering the last two questions, please think about differences in: style, delivery, argumentation, organization, and the like.

12. What differences, if any, do you see in the various regions' expectations for individual events performances?

13. What differences, if any, do you see in the various regions' expectations for debate?

Thanks again. Please return your survey to the box provided at the ballot drop-off table.

Criticalizing Forensics

James Dimock, Minnesota State University, Mankato
Leah White, Minnesota State University, Mankato

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Both authors contributed equally to this work.

Abstract

Forensics is generally conceived of as an educational activity which, because it encourages students to actively participate in the learning experience, lends itself to critical pedagogy. Competition, while a crucial part of forensics, can often work counter to the critical ends of forensics by inscribing upon the competitors' bodies the unspoken, uncritically accepted norms of the activity. This paper advocates the infusion of ideas developed by Augusto Boal as a means of re-criticalizing forensic programs without abandoning the competitive framework.

Criticalizing Forensics

This is the theatre I believe in: the place where we can stand and see ourselves. Not see what others tell us we are, or should be – but see our deepest selves! (Boal, 2001, p.ii)

The premise that forensics is essentially an educational activity has been generally accepted since Ehninger (1952) distinguished between forensics as a co-curricular rather than extra-curricular activity. While from time to time some challenges to that premise surface, such challenges aim not at the abandonment of the educational basis of forensics but rather the reassertion of those educational goals. Even the most pointed critics ultimately support the educational potential of the activity. Burnett, Brand and Meister (2003) charge that forensics as currently practiced focuses almost exclusively "on competition and not on an often-referenced education model" (p. 12) and accuse the forensic community of propagating a myth of education which "provides the activity with a sense of heightened legitimacy which masks, or distorts, the competitive reality of forensics." (p. 15) Their criticism is motivated, however, by the hope that in exposing the myth "the community will begin to see that the activity needs educational bolstering" (p. 19) and "that the present myth of what the activity is all about, will become a future reality." (p. 20)

This paper begins with the assumption that forensics is both competitive and educational. Proceeding from that assumption we are most interested in what we as forensic educators are teaching and what our students are learning. Specifically we argue herein that forensics has the potential

to be a critical pedagogical practice. Forensics is historically grounded in liberatory and democratic practice and has proven itself to be an empowering activity. We argue that the competitive aspects of forensics have not overwhelmed the educational benefits of participation in forensics but they have de-criticalized that education in the sense that it has become increasingly disempowering. The invisible structures of power constrain student initiative. We do not presume that competition is inherently destructive, rather we argue that it is possible to prevent competition from blinding us to the critical pedagogy to which our activity lends itself. In an effort to re-criticalize forensic education, or to reframe the activity such that the critical dimensions are emphasized, we first discuss the potential of forensics as critical pedagogy, second explore the many ways competition problematizes this potential until we finally turn to the work of Brazilian theater activist, Augusto Boal and the practices he developed as part of what he calls the Theater of the Oppressed.

Forensics as Critical Pedagogy

Forensic educators have made a number of claims with respect to the educational benefits of participating in competitive public speaking. Preston (1992) contends that "intercollegiate forensics has been shown to provide extensive added value to its participant, regardless of whether the student stresses debate, individual events or both." (p. 19) Forensic students have identified "increased self-confidence and feeling of personal accomplishment, improved public speaking, research and critical thinking skills and broad-based learning about subjects and people" (McMillian & Todd-Mancillas, 1991, p. 15). Specifically with respect to oral interpretation of literature, Gernant (1991) concluded that the activity "can be a valuable device in which students learn to select, analyze, and defend literature as well as present believable and understandable personal interpretations of an author's work." (p. 41)

This practice of constructing a competitive space as a means of developing skill in public speaking begins in the marketplaces and forums of ancient Greece with what Aristotle (1984) called "contentious speech," or arguments the purpose of which was not the discovery of or the propagation of "truth" but rather "refutation, falsity, paradox, solecism and fifthly to reduce the opponent in the discussion to babbling." (p. 279) Such practices were not engaged as simple entertainment nor pursued entirely for the purpose of winning victory over opponents. The skills developed were considered essential for those who wished to succeed in the burgeoning democracies of Ancient Greece. Developing such skills, moreover, was a critical education to the extent that it destabilized the established political order. Providing the people with the ability to speak on their own behalf threatened the entrenched power of aristocrats like Plato. The ability to speak was, for the Greeks, directly correlated with power which is the preoccupation of the critical pedagogue.

Critical pedagogy embraces as a central assumption "there is no such thing as a *neutral* education process" (Shaull, 1996, p. 16) and thus, as educators, we can either perpetuate the existing social order or engage in "'the practice of freedom,' the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of

their world" (p. 16). Kellner (2003) elaborated that a critical pedagogy aims at the formation of "complex dialectical perspectives that reject and neglect oppressive or false features of a position, while appropriating positive and emancipatory aspects." (p. 53) A critical pedagogy is thus more than anti-authoritarian; it is a pedagogy of liberation.

By virtue of both its subject matter and its practice, forensics is well suited to play a central role in a liberationary pedagogy. In the first instance, forensics seeks to develop skills in both critical thinking and in public speaking and advocacy, encouraging both the practice of critique and providing students with the skills to articulate that critique within the public sphere. Moreover, forensic students participate directly in the construction of knowledge, the development of skills and education through experience. Forensics, then, rejects what Freire (1996) called the banking method of education the first precept of which "is not to think" (p. 136) and the end of which is the domestication and pacification of the student in such a way as to "anesthetize the people." (p. 130) Students competing in forensics test ideas, challenge assumptions, and grapple with ideas. Moreover, they do so in a context which welcomes and invites such behaviors while providing students with the opportunity for reflection and self-evaluation. It activates students, encourages them to think of themselves as empowered agents of action and change while habituating them to thinking critically.

Despite how conducive forensics is to a critical pedagogical approach, very little research has been done within the community to explore how the skills and personal characteristics learned in the activity may be transferred to a broader goal of social activism. As Mitchell (2000) notes, "the ripples of today's teaching will undulate far into the future, as citizens draw upon their schooling experiences to shape their contributions to the public arguments of tomorrow" (p. 135). In his work, he suggests using a dialogic role-play approach to argumentation instruction as a means to prepare better students for future public argument. Beyond Mitchell's work, Miller-Rassulo (1988) proposes that the performance strategy known as "trigger scripting" be integrated into forensics. Trigger scripting involves the performance of literature with the clear attempt to illicit a critical response from the audience, thus spurring them to be agents for change. Although the current conceptualization of Program Oral Interpretation embraces the persuasive goals of trigger scripting, the event is still primarily focused on argumentation rather than actuation. Given the clear potential for forensics to be guided by a critical pedagogy, the lack of more research and practice in this area is troubling.

Competition and Decriticalization

The promise of forensics as a liberationary practice has been circumvented by an overemphasis on competition and the resulting conventions and norms which reassert control over the student. Multiple researchers (Cronn-Mills & Golden, 1997; Epping & Labrie, 2005; VerLinden, 1996) have observed the construction of norms and conventions, adherence to which is

"virtually mandatory to succeed in the activity" (VerLinden, 1997, p. 23). We contend, however, that the impact of these conventions goes well beyond potential "competitive disadvantages," (Epping & Labrie, 2005, p. 26) but rather decriticalizes forensics as a pedagogy.

In his seminal work, *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1995) argued that contemporary modes of punishment – imprisonment of the body rather than acts of violence on the body – are intended to make control "coextensive with society; not to punish less, but to punish better; to punish with an attenuated severity perhaps, but in order to punish with more universality and necessity; to insert the power to punish more deeply into the social body," (p. 82) The movement from using torture and death as the primary modes of punishment is certainly a movement to be applauded but Foucault warns that the move was not motivated by a sense of the humane as much as the economy of power. As a means of social control, the brutalization of the body is simply not as effective as control of the mind. Removing the reigns of control from the hands of the torturer and placing them in the hands of "educationalists, psychologists and psychiatrists" (Foucault, 1995, p. 30) has made the control gentler but also more total, albeit subtle. According to Gutting (2005) Foucault's "most striking thesis…is that the disciplinary techniques introduced for criminals have become the model for other modern sites of control (schools, hospitals, factories, etc.)" (p. 81) and when viewed from this perspective, the norms and conventions of forensics take on a whole new light.

Forensics is governed by strict scheduling, the obedience to which is the hallmark of a well-run competition. Students must be in particular places at precise times and, in a very real sense, the first lesson of forensics is being where you are supposed to be when you are supposed to be there. This imperative extends beyond the periods of competition as students are often required to observe other rounds in order to "support the team" and "learn from others." Even when not in competition rounds, the competitive impulse controls the location of the body.

Ironically, the control of the student body is most visible, however, at the moment of the student performance. It is this moment when students are actually making a persuasive speech or interpreting a work of poetry, for example, that they are under the most scrutiny. The control is at its most total at the moment of speaking when, under the assumptions of a liberationist pedagogy, students ought to be the most unfettered. At this moment, as Cronn-Mills and Golden (1997) and Epping and Labrie (2005) point out, students must adhere to expectations which dictate the range of motion (the speaker's triangle for example), the pacing and punctuation of speech (the tight, clipped diction of public address), gaze (off stage focus) and even the topics which can be addressed (the prioritizing of the novel over the traditional). Cronn-Mills and Golden (1997) specifically note with respect to interpretation events, that these unspoken rules dictate even the manner of script book which "may not be any other color than black, no bigger than 6-1/2" x 8-1/2" by 1", and must have three rings to hold the manuscript" (para. 9). They continue:

> The little black book should not flow elegantly through a performance, but rather demonstrate a precision in managing. The book should, for example, pop open in an interpreter's hands with clean, hard lines. The rule of military precision is brought to the forefront in dramatic duo. Partners will carefully control their books in exactly the same manner including, being sure the books are held at the same angle before popping open with precision timing. (para. 19)

Although their descriptions are often humorous and presented tongue-in-cheek, Cronn-Mills and Golden (1997) articulate an underlying system of control, a system of rules imposed and enforced upon the students and which distinguishes those who are *good* from those who are not. Those who follow the rules are rewarded; those who fail to do so are punished. Foucault (1995) begins his discussion of *discipline* by describing the "ideal figure of the solider" (p. 135) with respect to his posture, stance, gaze and dress. This description, although differing in the particulars, might just as easily be made of the forensic competitor and with the same result: a disciplined and "docile body that may be subjected, used and transformed and improved" (Foucault, 1995, p. 136). This is not a disciplining of the body as a whole but "a subtle coercion, of obtaining holds upon it at the level of the mechanism itself—movements, gestures, attitudes, rapidity: an infinitesimal power over the active body" (Foucault, 1995, p. 137). The purpose of such control is the production of what Foucault (1995) called "subjected and practised [sic] bodies, 'docile' bodies" (p. 138) or, as Gutting (2005) put it, "bodies that not only do what we want but do it precisely in the way that we want." (p. 82) This docility is produced by three means, each of which is as distinctive of not only of the modern penal system but of contemporary forensic practice as well.

Foucault points out that the "success of disciplinary power derives no doubt from the use of simple instruments; hierarchical observation, normalizing judgement [sic] and their combination in a procedure that is specific to it, the examination." The first of these, *hierarchical observation* is, as Gutting (2005) put it, "based on the obvious fact that we can control what people do merely by observing them" (p. 82) and Foucault (1995) contended that the "perfect disciplinary apparatus would make it possible for a single gaze to see everything constantly." (p. 173) During competition a judge is granted the seat at the center of the room, the space most optimal for observing the speaker who is displayed before the judge's gaze. But this gaze does not cease once the speech is over. Forensic students are reminded that the judge in their next round could be anyone and that before they speak and act they should think about how their behavior might influence a future judge. This omnipresent observation is tied to the second distinctive practice of modern discipline, the *normalizing judgment*. The unceasing gaze does not simply observe but also evaluates and ranks.

> It brings five quite distinct operations into play: it refers individual actions to a whole that is at once a field of com-

> parison... It differentiates individuals from one another, in terms of the following overall rule: that the rule be made to function as a minimal threshold... It measures in quantitative terms and hierarchizes in terms of value the abilities, the level, the "nature" of individuals. It introduces, through this "value-giving" measure, the constraint of a conformity that must be achieved. Lastly, it traces the limit that will define difference in relation to all other differences... In short, it *normalizes*. (Foucault, 1995, p. 182-183)

The competitor is ranked on a numerical scale, somewhere between one and five, and then rated on a scale usually from 25 to one or from100 to 70. The purpose of ranking and rating, obviously, is to determine a winner without which there wouldn't be a competition. The impact of this quantification of abilities and performance is, just as in the prison and the military academies described by Foucault (1995), subordination, docility and that "they might all be like one another." (p. 182)

The final instrument of discipline, the *examination*, "combines the techniques of an observing hierarchy and those of normalizing judgment" and "makes it possible to qualify, to classify and to punish. It establishes over individuals a visibility through which one differentiates and judges them." (Foucault, 1995, p. 184) Gutting (2005) elaborates:

> The results of examinations are recorded in documents that provide detailed information about the individuals examined and allow power systems to control them...On the basis of these records, those in control can formulate categories, averages, and norms that are in turn a basis for knowledge. The examination turns the individual into a 'case' – in both senses of the term: a scientific example and an object of care (and, of course, for Foucault, caring implies controlling). (p. 86)

The final culmination of the forensic tournament, the bestowing of awards concluding with the distribution of 'packets' each containing not only the ballot as a written record of the hierarchical observation and normalizing judgment but a complete schematic tabulation of results. The unseen figures who run the tab room, the guardians of the records and controllers of the tournament are, for a brief moment, made visible to bestow honors, visible markers of success.

Thus, while forensic competition appears liberationist in that it develops students as speakers and thus empowers them as agents of action, that liberation is constrained within a rigorous system of control, the purpose of which is to constrain and pacify the student. Mitchell (1998) observes what he calls "the spectator posture" in which forensics competitor are witness to and describers of events but not participants in them.

> The sense of detachment associated with the spectator posture is highlighted during episodes of alienation in which

> debaters cheer news of human suffering or misfortune. Instead of focusing on the visceral negative responses to news accounts of human death and misery, debaters overcome with the competitive zeal of contest round competition show a tendency to concentrate on the meanings that such evidence might hold for the strength of their academic debate arguments. (para. 10)

This spectator posture, in which human misery and policy failures become opportunities for persuasive and informative speeches, things to be talked about rather than dealt with, is, Mitchell charges "the most politically debilitating failures of contemporary education" (para. 10). Seen from this perspective, forensics cannot be liberationist but rather becomes an instrument of producing the same docility and domestication realized in oppressive pedagogies but, because it constrains the soul rather than the body, its touch is less painful and thus less visible. It passes without notice and thus escapes critique.

We contend, however, that it is possible, within the competitive framework, to create a space from within which the student can levy such a critique and thus re-criticalize forensics. The key to construction of that space is provided by Augusto Boal and his seminal work with Theatre of the Oppressed.

Augusto Boal's Approach to Activist Theater

Augusto Boal is one of the most influential figures in the area of activist theater. In that Boal's work and forensic practice are both rooted in the act of public performances, an application of Theater of the Oppressed methods to forensics is possible. Boal's (1979) seminal work, *Theatre of the Oppressed*, in which he argues "theater is a weapon" (p. i) which can be used to confront oppressive forces, is widely utilized for its adaptability to a variety of contexts and cultures. Drawing on the work of Freire, Boal constructed an intricate set of performance exercises and strategies intended to teach participants about the nature of oppression; both how an oppressor oppresses you and also how to fortify yourself to fight the oppressor. Boal considers his methods a rehearsal for the actual fighting people must do in their everyday lives in order to enact social change. According to Howard (2004), Boal approaches performance as "a proactive tool, a way to plan what to do when a situation arises, not a reflection of what happened." (p. 220) His methods hinge on a series of exercises, or "games," that help illustrate the different ways people function as oppressors and are oppressed by others. Boal suggests that it is only through the engagement of our bodies that we can fully come to understand the social forces with which we live. These games build cohesion among participants, but also serve as the foundation upon which Theatre of the Oppressed performances are built.

Boal's techniques are grounded in the belief that audience members must be removed from their passive role as "spectators" in order to take on an active role as "spect-actors". Consistent with Mitchell's (1998) critique

of forensics, Boal understands the spectator's role as passive and disconnected. Boal argues that performance can only function as an important tool for confronting oppression if it becomes an active and immersive experience. Magill (1995) explains, "Boal's notion of acting goes beyond the boards and the spotlight into everyday life. Spectators become SPECT-ACTORS in the democratic arena where they set their own agenda in relation to the problems they want to address in their everyday lives. Theatre becomes a rehearsal for change in everyday life." (p. 51) This rehearsal for everyday life is most apparent in Boal's technique which he refers to as forum theatre.

In forum theatre, actors develop scenes which illustrate situations in which audience members might find themselves confronting some form of oppression. After viewing the scenes, audience members are asked to discuss what the actors could have done differently to more effectively confront the obstacles presented in the scene. Audience members are then invited to replace actors in the scene and enact the changes themselves. The technique hinges on the principle that inviting audience members to actually take part in the creation of the new scene equips them with the skills needed to enact the same changes in their everyday lives.

Although Boal's initial work with activist theatre views oppression as driven by hegemonic political forces, his later work reconceptualizes oppression as something which can be more internal. Boal (1995) referred to this type of oppression as "the cop in the head," or the personal fears which prevent us from taking action. Otty (1995) explains that Boal's new approach "was intended to discover how we have come to internalize the oppressions which prevent us from living well." (p. 90) Regardless of the nature of the oppression, Boal has given us performance techniques which can, and do, fundamentally change lives. Exposing forensic students to Boal's theories and techniques can help counter some of the normative constraints competition has placed on forensic participants. These constraints can be found in the obvious external structures imposed by tournament logistics, but also the internal battles students must fight as they negotiate the oppressions related to winning and losing in a competitive environment.

Augusto Boal and Forensic Pedagogy

While forensics is inherently a critical pedagogy, current practices serve to decriticalize the activity first, through domestication without critiquing the assumption that such control is necessary and good and, second, the resulting pacification, or the purgation of the will to act in ways that challenge power. We believe that Boal offers a framework whereby we as forensic educators re-criticalize forensics as pedagogy. In particular Boal's emphasis upon praxis, or the intersection of theory and practice, provides us with a set of practical activities coaches and teachers can introduce to forensics.

Boal (1979) outlines the four major stages one must go through in order to transform a spectator into an actor. These are: knowing the body, making the body expressive, understanding the theater as language and prac-

ticing the theater as discourse. All of these stages center around actions and exercises intended to make participants more self-aware of their own internal and external oppressions. Boal's usefulness, in terms of his ability to enhance forensic pedagogy, can be found in these four stages.

Initially, Boal (1979) argues one must know the body. When utilizing Boal's techniques this involves "a series of exercises by which one gets to know one's body, its limitations and possibilities, its social distortions and possibilities of rehabilitation." (Boal, 1979, p. 126) In terms of understanding how one experiences oppressions, as well as how others may experience those same or different oppressions, Boal suggests we must become aware of how our bodies function. What can one's own body do that other bodies cannot? What actions are prohibitive for one's body that other bodies can do with ease?

Boal (1979) presents many activities, or games, in which actors participate in order to gain this bodily awareness. One such game is called 'Columbian Hypnosis'. In this game:

> One actor holds her hand palm forward, fingers upright, a few centimeters away from the face of another, who is then, as if hypnotized and must keep his face constantly the same distance from the hand of the hypnotizer, hairline level with her finger-tips, chin more or less level with the base of her palm. The hypnotizer starts a series of movements with her hand vertical in relation to the ground, then horizontal, then diagonal, etc. – the partner must contort his body in every way possible to maintain the same distance between face and hand. (Boal, 1992, p.63)

This game is effective in creating bodily knowledge because it forces actors to move in ways unfamiliar to their daily routines. Participants are encouraged to challenge their partners by placing their bodies into "ridiculous, grotesque, uncomfortable positions" (Boal, 1992, p. 63). The hypnotizer is essentially "controlling" the body of the hypnotized. With this encouragement to challenge, however, also comes a responsibility to be aware of the partner's physical limits. The exercise teaches actors to be conscious of their own bodies as well as how their bodies differ from others.

By becoming aware of our most fundamental limitations, we become cognizant of how we function within the larger world of oppressive forces. For example, when working with forensic students participating in duo interpretation we have observed tension when one partner is capable of performing rigorous blocking but the other partner is not due to some physical limitation. It is imperative that both partners understand each other's limits in terms of creating a believable presentation. Beyond this, however, the students need to gain an understanding for how those limits may impact lives outside of the forensic environment.

The second stage in Boal's approach is making the body expressive. Boal (1979) argues, "In our culture we are used to expressing everything through words, leaving the enormous expressive capabilities of the body in

an underdeveloped state" (p. 130). He suggests that all participants must first "play" with expression before they can translate that into effective performance. Boal's techniques include a vast assortment of games one can encourage participants to play that will force them to speak with their bodies rather than their voices.

Boal (1992) offers a series of games he refers to as the "modeling sequence." In these games, actors take turns working as sculptor and model. The point of the games is to see how the body can function as an expressive instrument. Whereas "Columbian Hypnosis" taught actors to be aware of their physical capabilities in terms of range of movement, the modeling sequence illustrates the body's ability to be communicative. The modeling sequence begins with an activity where the sculptor can touch his/her model. Boal (1992) describes the game writing:

> The participants arrange themselves in two lines facing each other. One of the lines is made up of sculptors, and the other of statues. At the beginning of the exercise, each sculptor starts using her hands to model the statue she has in mind. To this end she touches the 'statue's' body, taking care to achieve the effects she is striving for, down to the smallest detail. (p. 127)

The modeling must occur through action and reaction. Sculptors cannot strike the pose they wish the model to take and then have the model mirror that pose. Boal (1992) argues it is necessary to "touch, to mould; each action on the part of the sculptor provokes a corresponding reaction." (p.127-128) Once participants are comfortable with this form of modeling they are then asked to begin modeling without touching. At this point the sculptors must use their own movements to communicate to the model how they wish the model to be sculpted. Once again, mirroring is not an option. Thus, sculptors learn to use their own bodies to express their wishes for how the models' bodies should take shape.

With respect to physical activities and exercises, forensic educators and coaches have long understood the value of warm-ups as a means preparing students for competition: exercising the body and vocal chords, loosening up, building excitement and energy, and developing a sense of shared purpose and team spirit. One of the strengths of warm-ups is that students participate in a shared experience, one that may stretch back through generations of students. Coaches lead warm-ups they learned as freshmen. This contributes to the growth of a culture, a shared ritual connecting teams across the country while permitting each to develop its own unique sense of identity.

We cannot overlook, however, that warm-ups are also a colonization of the body. The underlying authority of tradition imposes itself upon students, directing their bodies, controlling them and habituating their bodies to control by power. For Boal (1992), this is a matter of no small significance to the extent that a "bodily movement 'is' a thought and a thought expresses itself in corporeal form." (p. 49) Group warm-ups that do not take into consideration the abilities of the actors involved can, ironically, be exclusionary in

their attempt to be inclusionary. For example, we have a student who suffers from nodules on her vocal cords. When expected to shout during warm-ups she is doing her body actual physical harm. Our purpose here is not to simply inscribe upon the student body some new form that reflects our interests, even if our interests are critical and liberationist, but rather "with the objective of making each person aware of his [sic] own body, of his bodily possibilities, and of the deformations suffered because of the type of work he performs." (Boal, 1979, p. 127) Our objective is students' discovery of the possibilities of their bodies.

Although Boal's (1992) book *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* contains numerous exercises one could integrate into warm-ups, we offer his game titled "Carnival in Rio" as one feasible option. In this game the actors are divided into several groups of three. The participants are numbered one, two and three. Boal (1992) explains:

> The workshop leader says 'Number one' and all the number ones start moving around the room with a rhythm of sound and movement (a different rhythm each). The other two members of each trio must imitate their leader. The workshop leader says "Number two' and all number twos must initiate a different sound and movement, which the other members of their group must imitate exactly. Then, 'Number three'. When all three have invented their rhythmic sounds and movements, the workshop leader says 'Back to your original movements' and each person returns to their original movement. After a few moments, the workshop leader says 'Unify!'; as soon as one member of each trio decides to copy another, then the third person must follow the majority, so that all three end up doing the same sound and movement. (p. 98)

At this point the leader tells the participants they are free to change groups if they wish. If people see a group performing a movement and sound they prefer they can leave their original group and join the new group. If a group member is left by both original members, that person must also join a new group. Although Boal does not require all participants eventually unify into one group, our experience has shown us that this often happens. Or, at the very least two dominate groups end up competing for the remaining individual members.

Not only does this activity warm-up students' voices and bodies, but it also lets them explore the physical abilities and preferences of their team members. Everyone involved has the opportunity to introduce a sound and movement of his/her choice. Although the exercise encourages a move toward unity, it is a negotiated unity. Engaging in a discussion following the activity can also lead to an awareness regarding what team members' movements and sounds exerted the most influence on the rest of the group. Did students abandon their own choices because another option was preferable or because of some sort of pressure to unify to someone else's will?

Understanding theater as language is the third stage in Boal's method. He describes this as, "one begins to practice theater as a language that is living and *present*, not as a finished product displaying images from the past." (Boal, 1979, p.126) This involves the audience working with the actors by first offering suggestions for scenes (simultaneous dramaturgy), second manipulating the actor's bodies to help physically illustrate concepts and emotions (image theater) and finally directly intervening into the dramatic action (forum theater). Whereas the first two stages of Boal's method are more passive and preparatory, this stage moves spectators into the active role of co-actors. Although simultaneous dramaturgy, image theater and forum theater work together to accomplish this stage of Boal's method, a brief explanation of image theater will be sufficient to illustrate the concept.

In image theater, actors are asked to use their bodies to express specific concepts and emotions. Whereas the modeling sequence games described above focus primarily on more concrete poses and shapes, image theater moves into the abstract. Image theater games begin with actors selecting a theme they wish to explore. For example, the selected theme could be violence. A few actors are then selected to use their bodies to create a pose or frozen image expressing that theme. The actors work alone and then individually present their "images" to the rest of the group. Others in the group are then asked if they can suggest any images different from those already shown. At this point, anyone in the group may come forward and offer their image. When all who wish have shared images, the game moves into what Boal refers to as dynamisation. At this point the participating individuals all go to the center of the room and simultaneously strike their individual poises. Boal (1992) explains that "presenting all these individual visions together gives us a multiple vision of the subject, in other words, an overview, an 'objective' vision…the object is no longer to know what each individual thinks, but to see what everybody thinks." (p. 165) The image theater exercises help actors understand how theater can communicate abstract, yet highly charged emotional messages.

It is at this stage that Boal's approach to activist theater shows its full potential for enacting change. Exposing forensic students to Boal's techniques can help them understand how performance can be an organic process informing all aspects of their lives, rather than a static end product for mere competitive purposes. For example, students who are disillusioned with the restricting norms and rules that guide competitive forensic performances could be encouraged to engage in an image theater exercise that allows them to use their skills to actually reveal how they feel when their competitive performances are being restricted. Consequently students can understand the power of performance to motivate change rather than merely entertain.

The management of conflict is a primary concern for all forensic coaches and educators. Conflict distracts us from more concrete preparation for competition, saps our mental, emotional and physical energy, and fosters the entrenchment of factions that undermine the team structure. Unfortunately, however, most of the models we have for addressing conflict are

unambiguously authoritarian. They are top-down, imposed means of conflict management. The techniques of Theatre of the Oppressed provide us with the tools for a bottom-up approach to conflict. While Boal (1979; 1992) intended forum theatre, for example, as a means to address political and social problems, the format lends itself to conflict resolution wherein students can perform the conflict and rehearse solutions. The critical strength of the forum approach to conflict management is that it discourages students from simply talking about problems and proposing solutions. Rather, students are encouraged to intervene in the action, to become spect-actors in the conflict. In testing alternatives, students do not propose solutions or challenge perspectives but replace actors in the drama and "must continue the physical actions of the replaced actors; they are not allowed to come on stage and talk, talk, talk." (Boal, 1979, p. 139) In this way, students become not only participants in the conflict but also in the resolution of that conflict. They are thus able to understand themselves not as objects acted upon by power, but as actors who perform power.

The final stage of Boal's method is practicing theater as discourse. It is at this stage that the "spectator-actor creates 'spectacles' according to his [sic] need to discuss certain themes or rehearse certain actions." (Boal, 1979, p.126) Boal's ultimate goal is to equip his audience with the skills and resources necessary to take his methods into their own hands. Essentially, Boal wants theater to be a "rehearsal of revolution" where the spectator "no longer delegates power to the characters to either think or to act in his [sic] place" but rather begins to instigate and fulfill the action on his/her own (Boal, 1979, p. 155). The goal here is for those trained in Boalian methods to take these skills into the world to enact change that confronts oppressions.

Most coaches are sustained by the authentic hope that their students will leave the world of competitive forensics and use the knowledge and skills they gained to not only enhance their own careers and personal lives, but also society at large. We in forensics are surrounded by students full of potential to enact positive changes in the world. Boal (1979) said the "main objective" of a poetics of the oppressed is, "to change the people from 'spectators,' passive beings in the theatrical phenomenon—into subjects, into actors, transformers of the dramatic action…The liberated spectator, as a whole person, launches into action. No matter that the action is fictional; what matters is the action!" (p. 122) Incorporating the perspective of Boal's Theater of the Oppressed into the practice of forensics habituates students to seeing themselves as agents rather than subjects. Students rehearse their role as agents of action able to apply the skills learned in forensics. Coaches can nurture this impulse by encouraging students to reflect on ways in which they can use their talents and skills outside the competitive realm of forensics.

Engaging the team in small and large service projects can help students see the role they can play on the larger social stage of their lives. The most encouraging example of such an activist and critically grounded service project was introduced by Warriner (1998) who suggests a service project that involves using collegiate forensic participants in the integration of forensic

clubs into correctional facilities. Unlike other suggested community service projects, Warriner moves beyond the more self-serving goals of community involvement for the purpose of increased positive public relations for a team, and into the realm of a project that is authentically activist. Evaluations of the prison project implemented at the Ionia Temporary Correctional Facility by Warriner and colleagues at Central Michigan University in 1996 showed positive life changes for both the participating inmates and team members. Encouraging students to speak and act out in support of the causes about which they are concerned helps to fulfill Boal's goal of practicing theater as discourse.

Conclusion

Foucault was not especially optimistic about liberationist movements. In his infamous debate with American intellectual Noam Chomsky, Foucault expressed his concern that in the struggle for power, the end is not a more just social order but rather about who will hold the reigns of power. "[T]he proletariat doesn't wage war against the ruling class because it considers such a war to be just," he said. "The proletariat makes war against the ruling class because, for the first time in history, it wants to take power." (Chomsky & Foucault, 2006, p. 51) Even though skeptical with respect to the possibility of constructing a truly just social order, Foucault still believed there was a task both "immediate and urgent...that we should indicate and show up, even where they are hidden, all the relationships of political power which actually control the social body and oppress or repress it." (Chomsky & Foucault, 2006, p. 40)

Boal's Theater of the Oppressed provides us with a means of revealing the hidden structures of power that forensics competition imposes upon students. Through performance, students can know their bodies; develop an understanding of their bodies' expressiveness; express themselves and understand performance as a vehicle for enacting change. They can discover how oppressive forces impact them and rehearse strategies for personal acts of resistance.

As critical pedagogues and forensic coaches, we can make use of Boal's technique to help students discover the forces which tend toward domestication and pacification rather than liberation. We must, however, acknowledge the inherent limitations of our role in a pedagogy of liberation. As Freire (1993) points out, liberation cannot be imposed by the power structure and it is we, the coaches, the judges, the tab room workers, and tournament directors, who are the power structure. Only subordinated students have the "historical task...to liberate themselves and their oppressors as well." (Freire, 1993, p. 26) Our capacity to transform forensics into a critical pedagogy is limited to the extent that as pedagogues, we are only half the equation and we are not the most important half. Indeed our success as critical pedagogues hinges upon our willingness to relinquish our hold on power. At best we can implement a pedagogy "*with*, not *for* the oppressed (whether individuals or peoples) in the incessant struggle to regain their humanity." (Freire, 1993, p.

30) Ultimately, the greatest impediment to the forging of that pedagogy is the one essential of forensics as a competitive activity: the ballot.

Competition is at the heart of forensics. We agree with Burnett, Brand and Meister (2001) when they contend that "competition provides the incentives to teach our students more thoroughly, to discover new sources of arguments and interpretations, and then submit those ideas to peer judgment...The incentive of competition pushes everyone to 'be the best they can be'—students learn, and new knowledge results." (p. 107) Competition offers a proven method of developing students' critical thinking skills over and above simple instruction in argumentation and performance (Allen, Berkowitz, & Louden, 1999). We would contend further that the community of competition permits students to forge relationships with teammates and with competitors all over the country and also with faculty at their own and other universities. In short, we believe that the benefits of competition are significant and cannot be realized with the same significance outside of the competitive context. But such clear and obvious benefits should not blind us to the inherently oppressive nature of competition, especially the tyranny of the ballot. We believe, however, that as forensic coaches we can encourage practices which counter the homogenizing tyranny of the ballot. Specifically by introducing the techniques of Boal's Theater of the Oppressed, we provide students with a means whereby the oppressive nature of competition can be made visible. As Freire (1993) pointed out, "As long as the oppressed remain unaware of the causes of their condition, they fatalistically 'accept' their exploitation." (p. 46) In order for students to challenge 'the cop in the head' they must first become aware that the cop is there. Boal's theatrical techniques have the capacity to illuminate the influence of the oppressive forces that impact the student competitors and constrain their bodies and thus their thoughts.

Moreover, we would suggest that benefits of this transformation of mind set can have a long-term influence on the activity. Today's judges and coaches were yesterday's competitors. By making them conscious of the oppressive as well as the empowering dimensions of forensic competition, we believe we can further develop what Giroux (1997) called 'emancipatory authority'. Giroux warned against the reactionary efforts to impose anti-democratic authority in education but he was equally concerned with efforts to abandon authority all together. Instead, we should foster "an alternative and emancipatory view of authority." (Giroux, 1997, p. 96) By making competitors aware of the coercive tendencies of the ballot we foster an environment wherein, as future judges, they conceive of themselves not as examiners but "as transformative intellectuals...not merely concerned with forms of empowerment that promote individual achievement and traditional forms of academic success" but also with "linking empowerment—the ability to think and act critically—to the concept of social transformation" (Giroux, 1997, p. 103).

It is our hope that in embracing the assumptions Boal articulated in the Theater of the Oppressed and implementing the strategies that he has

developed over his lifetime as an activist and educator, we can provide forensic students with the means whereby they can discover the forces of oppression and domination in not only forensic competition but also the disciplinary power in their lives outside forensics. This is not to say that integration of Boal's philosophy into your forensic program will transform students into committed activists. Rather it is our modest hope that Boal can suggest strategies that de-pacify students and help them remove the impediments which preclude them from becoming activists committed to social transformation.

Competitive public speaking, since it appeared in the marketplaces and forums of ancient Greece, has been a liberationist and democratizing practice. Like the sophists of old, however, we as forensic educators must take care that we are not simply acting as gatekeepers instructing students in the arts of blending in with the empowered class. If we are to be truly critical pedagogues, we must instill within our students the desire to transform the world around them as well as giving them the tools to do so. As Freire (1993) so eloquently declared: "To affirm that men and women are persons and as persons should be free, and yet do nothing tangible to make this affirmation a reality, is a farce." (p. 32)

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