Toward a Conceptual Justification for Duo Interpretation

DAVID C. KLOPE*

Within forensics, the event of duo interpretation has been a vague entity since its inception. The central reason for this ambiguity has been the lack of any conceptual justification for the practice of duo as a distinct form. Although duo is clearly related to solo interpretation and readers theatre, it is practiced separately and has never been related formally to either of these other forms. Further, no work has ever been published that explicitly delineates the theoretical nature of duo and the pedagogical motives behind its practice within forensics. In its current form, duo is an art form without an explanation.

There are two basic reasons why a conceptual justification of duo interpretation is essential. First, there is questionable value in developing an original art form without an explanation for the form chosen. Art is purposive, not random, and the quality of art is enhanced by the conceptual exploration of its premises. Second, duo is a practice peculiar to forensics, and forensics is a pedagogical activity. Teaching involves criteria of form; a performative activity cannot be effectively taught unless the nature and purpose of that activity is understood. Without any sort of conceptual justification there is a lack of distinct criteria by which to evaluate duo; teachers, students, and judges alike are left to their own idiosyncratic viewpoints. Clearly, the pedagogical value of duo is dubious, and by extension, the value of its practice in forensics is open to question.

It is not the purpose of this essay to condemn the current practice of duo within forensics. Rather, the intent here is to find some theoretical means of justifying duo in its current form. To determine a legitimate justification for duo this article examines current oral interpretation literature, Langer's concept of actual space, semiotics, and speech act theory.

DUO AND ORAL INTERPRETATION

As was noted above, there has never been a published rationale for the practice of duo interpretation. In the absence of any specific

explanation for duo as a form, it is reasonable to investigate related literature for information regarding duo. The use of such literature, however, is immediately problematic. One does not have to search far to realize that prominent texts in oral interpretation distinguish between only two categories of form: solo and group performance. Any performance involving more than one reader is automatically categorized as group performance; i.e. readers theatre. Coger defined "Interpreter's Theatre" as a medium "in which two or more oral interpreters through their oral reading cause an audience to experience literature."[1] Bacon described readers theatre as "the group reading of materials,"[2] and Lee and Gura referred to it as "a performance by a group of interpreters."[3] Since the *American Heritage Dictionary* defines "group" as "two or more,"[4] it can be assumed that oral interpretation literature is consistent: the presence of two readers in performance is considered a group and hence readers theatre. Clearly, on a numerical basis, such a definition includes duo.

Although it is tempting to label duo as readers theatre, the current practice of duo prevents such a connection. The American Forensic Association (AFA) has defined duo as follows:

> A cutting from a play, humorous or serious, involving the portrayal of two or more characters presented by two individuals. This material may be drawn from stage, screen, or radio. This is not an acting event. Thus, no costumes, props, lighting, etc., are to be used. Presentation is from the manuscript and not to each other. Maximum time limit is ten minutes including introduction.[5]

If duo were considered as readers theatre, these rules would be inappropriate in the following areas: (1) the exclusive use of drama, (2) the insistence on the use of manuscript and offstage focus, (3) the prohibition of costumes, props, lighting, etc., and (4) the failure to mention the role of bodily movement. Oral interpretation literature does not recognize any of these strictures as legitimate. First, Coger insisted that readers theatre "is not limited to play form."[6] Second,

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[1] L.I. Coger, "Interpreter's Theatre: Theatre of the Mind," *Quarterly Journal of Science,* 49 (1963), p. 49.

[2] W.A. Bacon, *The Art of Interpretation* (New York: Hold, Rinehard, and Winston, 1972), p. 407.

[3] C.I. Lee and T. Gura, *Oral Interpretation* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1982), p. 404.

[4] *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969), p. 582.

[5] American Forensic Association National Individual Events Tournament (1983-84), *Description of Events.*

[6] Coger, 163.

Maclay implied that manuscripts are not absolutely necessary: "If readers theatre is to feature the text... it seems specious to reason that such a purpose will be accomplished simply by placing the manuscript of the text on the stage."[7] Maclay also identified three types of focus available for readers theatre (offstage, onstage, and audience) as opposed to the one required by duo.[8] Third, regarding theatrical conventions, Bacon stated that "Readers theatre may indeed use costumes and makeup...lights, scenery, props."[9] Fourth, Coger and White spoke of the value of movement: "Movement, whether it be through space or merely a shifting of weight or a tightening of muscles, helps hold attention."[10] There is clearly a significant degree of conceptual permissiveness given to readers theatre in performance. The imposition of the AFA rules upon any entity categorized as readers theatre would be ironic indeed, for it would strip such an entity of the elements that allowed it to be characterized as readers theatre. Readers theatre that was subjected to AFA duo rules would cease to be readers theatre.

Clearly, if the present practice of duo is to be maintained, the activity cannot be characterized as readers theatre. Further, duo cannot be justified from related literature: current oral interpretation texts contain no explanation or defense for duo as currently practiced. Such a defense will require the examination of other theoretical grounds. Before this investigation, however, two observations must be made.

First, this discussion will be prescriptive as well as descriptive. Certain trends have been emerging in the competitive practice of duo that are ill-advised, trends that have occurred because of the silence of official rules on certain issues. In the absence of rule criteria or conceptual justification for duo there has been little basis for condemning practices such as excessive movement. The discussion below will suggest appropriate alterations to such practices.

Second, although this article is attempting to focus upon duo as a distinct entity, it cannot accomplish this task without distinguishing duo from readers theatre and solo performance. The nature of duo can best be seen in contrast to the nature of the other two forms of oral interpretation. It will first be necessary to differentiate duo and sol from readers theatre, and then to distinguish duo from solo interpretation.

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[7]J.A. Maclay, *Readers Theatre: Towards a Grammar of Practice* (New York: Random House, 1971), p. 4.

[8]Maclay, pp. 17-22.

[9]Bacon, p. 412.

[10]L.I. Coger and M.R. White, *Readers Theatre Handbook* (Glenview: Scott, Foresman, and Co., 1982), p. 54-55.

DUO (SOLO) VS. READERS THEATRE

As a communicative form, the emphasis of oral interpretation has always been upon the audience perception of the interpretative event. Above all, the oral interpreter seeks to impact the audience's perceptions, to manipulate visual and oral channels in a uniquely performative activity. Hence, it is appropriate to employ theoretical approaches to oral interpretation that address receiver-centered meaning ascription. Two such approaches can be found in Langer's concept of virtual space and Pierce's formulation of semiotics.

A useful means of illustrating Langer's concepts of virtual and actual space[11] is through their application to theatre. In the theatre, an audience's perception of literal on-stage activity might be referred to as actual space. That is, the audience's perception is strictly literal and sensual, they see and hear only what is actually on-stage. At the point when the audience begins imagining things that are not literally on-stage is when those activities can be said to be occurring in virtual space. Elam noted that virtual space is "a domain which does not coincide with its actual physical limits, a mental construct on the part of the spectator from the visual clues he receives."[12]

Applied to oral intepretation, one can say that virtual space is created when the literature is presented in such a way that an audience experiences the literature mentally by visualizing the scene and action that the readers describe. The key, however, is the lack of literalization. The literalization in the interpreter's body and voice of the content of the literature presented tends to pull the audience's perceptions on-stage and create actual space. That is, those items that are literalized no longer allow the interpretative participation of the audience's imagination, the meanings are thereby denotated, not connotated.

Although small, it is at this point that a distinction emerges between readers theatre and duo (and by extension, solo interpretation). In readers theatre the strategic use of on-stage focus is allowed when a given moment in the literature needs to be particularized. On-stage focus, however, creates actual space. At the moment of on-stage focus all action is also pulled on-stage; the interpreters, like actors in theatre, become literally identified with the physical activities of the characters they portray. Duo, however, as it is practiced under current rules, solely emphasizes virtual space. The requirements of offstage focus ensures that the readers

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11S.K. Langer, *Feeling and Form* (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1953).

[12]K. Elam, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama* (London: Methuen, 1980), p. 67.

will not literalize any moment in the literature they present. The majority of the "action" in the presented literature, because it is not literalized, must occur in the minds of the audience. Hypothetically, actual space is impossible in the performance of duo.

Another means of distinguishing between readers theatre and duo (solo) is through understanding their nature as semiotic entities. Semiotics is essentially the study of the relationship between signs and signifiers. A sign is a material form that refers to some entity beyond itself, "a physical presence, referring back to something absent."[13] The signifier is that entity referred to by the sign. For instance, the term 'cow' is a sign that signifies a four-legged animal. Similarly, an individual who shakes a clenched fist at another is issuing a sign that signifies hatred and possible violence. O'Sullivan et al. have observed that a sign "can have a variety of forms, such as words, gestures, photographs, or architectural features."[14] In essence, then, signs are symbols, and the discipline of semiotics is concerned with the generation of meaning through symbol systems.

Semiotics has expanded enormously in the past twenty years, and one area in which it has been employed profitably is theatre criticism. Kowzan first noted that "everything is a sign in a theatrical presentation."[15] In discussing the semiotization of all theatre objects, Elam asserted that "the very fact of their appearance on-stage suppresses the practical function of phenomena in favor of a symbolic or signifying role."[16] For instance, Eco described the placing of an actual drunk individual before an audience and claimed that as soon as this individual was shown to the audience that "the drunken man has lost his original nature of a real body among real bodies … he has become a semiotic device, he is now a sign."[17]

Semiotics can also provide an insightful conceptual framework for the understanding of oral interpretation. Actually, a reader in front of an audience cannot avoid being a set of signs. The interpreter who walks up to perform is "real" until the script is opened. Like Eco's drunk, the reader in performance ceases to be completely a real body among real bodies; the interpreter is a set of signs for the signified literary text.

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[13]U. Eco, "The Semiotics of Theatre Performance," *The Drama Review,* 21 (1978), p. 110.

[14]T. O'Sullivan, J. Hartley, D. Saunders, and J. Fiske, *Key Concepts in Communication* (London: Methuen, 1983), p. 24.

[15]As cited in Elam, p. 20.

[16]Elam, p. 21.

[17]Eco, p. 110.

Central to the application of semiotics to oral interpretation is an understanding of sign types. Probably the most extensive typology of signs was developed by C.S. Pierce, who eventually differentiated between ten trichotomies and sixty-six classes of signs.[18] For the present analysis Pierce's best known trichotomy is most appropriate: symbol, icon, and index. The latter two types, for reasons that cannot be developed in this essay, are most relevant to oral interpretation and will be discussed in detail.

An index is a sign that is causally connected to its object, either physically or through contiguity. Pierce stated that "an index is a sign which refers to the object that it denotes by virtue of being really affected by that object."[19] Two examples of indexes would be the rolling gait of a sailor that indicates his profession, or a knock on the door that indicates that someone is outside it.

The icon is best associated with similitude—the sign suggests the signified because of physical or conceptual resemblance. The icon is the broadest category of sign. Pierce further divided the icon into subclasses of image, diagram, and metaphor, subclasses distinguished by the degree of similarity between sign and signifier. An image is intended to be a direct and complete representation of the signified, such as a flag in a theatrical play that represents any given flag. In contrast, the diagram has only a general structural resemblance to its object; a circle, for instance, drawn to represent a wheel. The metaphor exists in the near absence of resemblance between sign and signified, when the similarity is "simply asserted rather than apparent, as in the case of an empty stage which becomes, for the audience, a battlefield."[20]

Pierce's trichotomy is most useful for attempting to isolate the performative nature of duo and solo interpretation in contrast to that of readers theatre. At the outset, however, it must be understood that no one form of oral interpretation can be categorized exclusively as one or another type of sign. In varying degrees, duo, solo, and readers theatre operate as both index and icon. The proper means of viewing their function is by means of a continuum, with each performative type involving differing degrees of sign types.

The sign type that most clearly describes the function of oral interpretation in general is the icon. Readers theatre, duo, and solo are iconic, but emphasize different subclasses. Readers theatre, for instance, allows some iconic image creation. On occasion the reader is allowed to give direct representation of a character (i.e. actual space). The audience is thereby asked to view the interpre-

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[18]C.S. Pierce, *Collected Papers, Vol. II* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1960). [19]Pierce, p. 22. [20]Elam, p. 24.

ter's visual and oral image (i.e. cues) as the literal representation of the character.

In contrast to readers theatre's permissiveness, duo should discourage iconic image creation whenever possible. The offstage focus rule suggests that duo is oriented towards the creation of virtual space, as the interpreters are prevented from literalizing any moment in the script. Thus, interpreters should be discouraged from attempting to completely represent their characters.

The subclass of icon that best describes the goal and function of readers theatre is the iconic diagram. In contemporary readers theatre, presentations employ blocking to give an audience general structural clues to form mental pictures of the literature presented. Stage movement can suggest such items as the physical environment of a scene. Hence, a direct representation of scene is not provided and the audience is allowed to imaginatively fill in the gaps through the structural resemblance of the stage picture to the actual scene.

To a degree, duo interpreters cannot avoid diagrammatic representation. The traditional taboo against stage movement in duo requires the interpreters to remain standing side by side and to engage in a minimum of gesture. Admittedly, this "taboo" is sorely tried in practice, as interpreters will often include as much movement as they imagine their judges will allow. Perhaps, in an effort to more clearly distinguish readers theatre from duo, an explicit prohibition against movement should be included in official forensic rules. Interpreters would thereby be prevented from diagrammatically demonstrating scene or character relationships through movement.

The traditional, often unwritten, prohibition against movement in duo suggests that the proper emphasis of duo is upon the iconic metaphor. The relationship between sign and signified, between the interpreters and the scene they represent, is asserted rather than apparent. The given stage picture in duo, two interpreters standing side by side, can, depending on the literature, equally represent two characters at a restaurant, on a battlefield, or on the Himalayan mountain K2. The relationship between the two interpreters and the scene in the presented literature is asserted, the performance occurs almost entirely in virtual space, and the audience is allowed to fill in the gaps with their imagination. In other words, the audience is allowed to decide for themselves the means by which the sign (interpreter's visual and vocal cues) should be connected with the signified (literature/scene). In no instance should the interpreters attempt to connect the sign and signifier with anything but the barest of gesture.

Considered as icons, then, duo emphasizes metaphor but allows a slight amount of diagram, while readers theatre focuses upon diagram and allows the creation of some literalizing image. In addition to the icon, the index sign type can also allow some further distinction between duo (solo) and readers theatre. The difference, again, is one of degree, not exclusion.

As was noted above, readers theatre occasionally allows the literalization of onstage events, i.e. the creation of image and actual space. In the creation of image interpreters are sometimes allowed to directly represent characters through movement, gesture, and stance. In such circumstances, the use of movement is an indexical function. It was noted previously that the rolling gait of a sailor was an indexical sign of his profession. In other words, the sailor's profession directly caused his walking style, so that an observer could guess his profession (signified) from his gait (sign). In the same way, the requirements of a character demand certain types of movement from a readers theatre performer, thus making the performer's body and movement a sign of the signified character. A twenty-one year old performer, for instance, who portrays a ninety-one year old, becomes an index of that character through necessarily altered movement. This indexical function remains the same even if the portrayal is diagrammatic rather than literal.

Not only does a specific indexical function act to create actual space, but the degree of actual space increases with the incremental rise in the number of separate communication channels employed indexically. For example, the literal representation of a character's voice in an oral interpretation performance is not likely to significantly alter the status of virtual space evoked by the performance. If the reader then adds literal movement and gesture (or other interpreter-produced channels), however, the audience will begin to connect the interpreter/sign more literally with the character/signified. The addition of each indexical function fleshes out the essence of the character on-stage; each function drastically reduces the interpretative interaction of the audience by essentially closing off the meaning of the index, insisting in effect that the index has only one meaning.

Clearly, then, the nature of the indexical function requires that duo (solo) be more strictly regulated than readers theatre if duo as a form is to remain distinct. Readers theatre is allowed more literalization, and hence more indices. Duo, however, must limit the number of interpreter-produced channels that serve indexical functions if it is to fulfill its goal of producing virtual space in performance. A degree of indexicality is obviously required in the voice, as differing characters may require voice adjustments by the

readers. Minor movement and gesture may also be appropriate in limited instances. In the interests of virtual space and metaphoric representation, however, the number of different interpreter-produced communicative channels employed in the performance of duo should be kept to a minimum.

DUO VS. SOLO

Up to this point an attempt has been made to suggest that readers theatre and duo (solo) should be considered as occupying different positions on a semiotic continuum. Solo interpretation has been considered together with duo because solo typically emphasizes virtual space and metaphoric representation in the same manner as duo. Clearly, however, duo and solo are practiced separately and considered to be relatively distinct activities. It is appropriate to investigate, therefore, whether there are conceptual and pragmatic reasons for distinguishing between duo and solo interpretation. The following discussion will seek to accomplish two tasks: (1) to argue that speech act theory can be applied to the study of oral interpretation, and (2) to demonstrate that speech act theory provides a useful means of viewing the distinctions between duo and solo interpretation.

One of the most obvious, and therefore one of the most overlooked, aspects of oral interpretation is that it employs language in its performance. Therefore, one potentially valuable way to examine oral interpretation-in-performance is to employ concepts revolving around the examination of language-in-use. It is reasonable to suppose that the language within oral interpretation-in-performance, especially that involving character interaction, might function in similar fashion to language employed in interaction.

One useful means of viewing all types of theatrical/interpretative performance is through speech act theory. One of the early proponents of the theory, Austin, claimed that the construct was founded on the notion that language is a means of social action.[21] Utterances, according to Austin, are not simply statements but are means of doing things. In any given utterance, two primary types of action may be present: (1) the illocutionary act, that act performed in the process of saying something, such as issuing an order or asking a question, and (2) the perlocutionary act, an act performed by means of saying something, the effect that utterance has upon a listener.

Theatre is a clear arena in which to view language action, in its manifestation within dramatic diologue. Elam noted that "Dra-

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[21] J.L. Austin, *How To Do Things With Words* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962).

matic discourse is a network of complementary and conflicting illocutions and perlocutions."[22] Ohmann further claimed that "in a play the action rides on a train of illocutions . . . movement of the characters and changes in their relations to one another with the social world of the play appear most clearly in their illocutionary acts."[23] Dialogue, then, does not simply describe or represent the action in a play; dialogue constitutes action, it *is* action.

Such a perspective on dramatic dialogue in terms of speech act theory provides an indication of the nature of duo. As duo in practice allows only dialogue, it can be argued that the primary emphasis in duo is upon action, the portrayal of two characters acting upon one another through language. Further, in duo the creation of virtual space must occur through the agency of language action, not description. The focus of dialogue is upon interaction, and although some descriptive material may be present in the lines, a sense of context is created for the audience through the literary characters' interaction with their environment in terms of their relation to each other. That is, context exists in duo as a strategic resource for two characters attempting to act upon one another, and the audience only perceives context through a perceptual screen formed by this interaction. Thus, virtual space is evoked through action.

Speech act theory is a useful means of viewing how duo functions, but is does not provide an independent basis for distinguishing between duo and solo. That is, the above action function of duo is potentially possible within solo interpretation, as the practice of solo within forensics allows the use of dramatic dialogue. If speech act theory is combined with some pragmatic considerations, however, a useful prescriptive distinction between duo and solo interpretation can be formed.

If the legitimacy of emphasizing literary dialogue in performance is granted, then it can be argued that, pragmatically, two interpreters present dialogue better than one. Anyone who has viewed the "ping-pong match" effect of a single reader attempting to maintain two separate focal points in the presentation of dialogue will recognize the confusion that these presentations can produce. Such a solo performance is particularly bewildering when the lines of dialogue are short and the character exchange rapid; the interpreter and the audience become quickly confused as to which character is speaking at any given moment. In duo, however, with one interpreter assigned to each character, this confusion is alleviated. The emphasis is still upon virtual space, but the visual

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[22]Elam, p. 159.
[23]R. Ohmann, "Literature as Act," in *Approaches to Poetics,* S. Chatman (Ed), (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973), p. 83.

cues are extended just enough (i.e. to two individuals) to ensure comprehension.

If speech act theory and the utilitarian perspective argued above are considered together, then it is reasonable to suggest that, within, forensics, the performance of dialogue should be limited to duo, allowing solo interpreters who desire to present dramatic material to use monologues. Such a regulation would allow duo exclusive right to emphasize what its numerical form and prescribed material allows it to do best: the nonproblematic presentation of two characters engaged in language action. At the least, the prescribed use of two readers suggests that such a form should accomplish a different task than a form that calls for a single reader. Actually, the single interpreter, who necessarily has a limited number of communicative channels at his/her disposal, is better situated for the creation of virtual space than either readers theatre or duo. The single interpreter, thorough the presentation of narrative material that emphasizes character portrayal and/or scene creation, can allow the audience the greatest amount of imaginative interaction with the literature.

CONCLUSION

Overall, it is clear that there are conceptual reasons for treating duo as an independent entity. Duo can be viewed on a semiotic continuum resembling solo interpretation in function more than readers theatre, a function that is oriented towards the creation of virtual space. The use of dialogue in duo, however, results in a greater emphasis upon language action than connotation, making its production of virtual space slightly less than solo interpretation. Thus, a distinction in practice can be made between duo and solo, suggesting that the difference between one and two readers is an adequate basis for somewhat different goals for the two forms.

It must be admitted that this attempt to construct independent ground for duo is incomplete, and that the lines between duo, solo, and readers theatre is still somewhat blurred. It is also true that precise boundaries cannot and should not be formed if artistic independence is to be maintained. Nevertheless, the need for conceptual justification for an activity remains. It is essential to have a purpose for engaging in a unique performative form, especially when one is engaged in a pedagogically oriented activity such as forensics. Without theoretical understanding of forms there is no clear vision of what is being taught through an activity. If duo interpretation as a forensic activity is to maintain artistic and pedagogical integrity, continued attempts must be made towards conceptual justification for the practice of duo interpretation.

The Tournament as Laboratory: Implications for Forensic Research

EDWARD J. HARRIS, JR.
RICHARD P. KROPP, JR.
ROBERT E. ROSENTHAL*

The intercollegiate forensic community, particularly those in-volved in the coaching of individual events, traditionally has emphasized the pedagogical nature of the activity while often neglecting the research opportunities inherent in forensic educa-tion. Our colleagues in debate have long claimed the field of argumentation theory as a link for many of their research efforts. Individual events, however, despite its obvious roots in argumenta-tion, persuasion, and rhetorical criticism, has only begun to lay claim to its theoretical foundation and offer insights and refine-ments of theoretical precepts through well developed research.

Forensics is now viewed by many within the field as an activity which unites both pedagogy and scholarship. However, the national organizations which oversee and govern modern inter-collegiate forensics have for too long ignored the research aspects of our activity. Individual events has long needed a research policy which, on one hand, fosters research opportunities while, on the other hand, safeguards forensic participants and the educational and competitive aspects of the profession. Absent such a policy, individual events research will flounder without direction and be subject to arbitrary limitations based on fears for the integrity of our competitive efforts.

The relationship between teaching and research in forensics was clearly articulated in the definition of the activity adopted by the second National Developmental Conference on Forensics in September 1984:

> The National Developmental Conference on Forensics, held in 1974, defined forensics as "an educational activity pri-marily concerned with using an argumentative perspective in examining problems and communicating with people." Such a definition, here reaffirmed, views forensics as a form of

rhetorical scholarship which takes various forms, including debate, public address, and the interpretation of literature. Forensics serves as a curricular and co-curricular laboratory for improving students' abilities in research, analysis, and oral communication. Typically, forensics activities are conducted in a competitive environment so as to motivate students and accelerate the learning process. Now, in 1984, forensics remains an ongoing, scholarly experience, uniting students and teachers, in its basic educational purpose.[1]

In order to underscore the importance of this balance, this essay is divided into two parts. The first section presents a rationale for forensic scholarship and suggests several areas where research seems most appropriate. The second section reinforces the pedagogical terms of the equation by presenting a number of guidelines to be implemented in the conduct of research.

The arguments favoring increased research in forensics are virtually the same as the rationale for scholarship in any academic field. Research, in broad terms, is the foundation of any discipline. The pedagogical function is the dissemination of what we have learned through scholarly inquiry. Organizational techniques, the formation of arguments, the development of ethos, and other individualized compartments of learning are united in cohesive theories of rhetoric. As the members of the Sedalia conference concluded: "Because research and scholarship are the foundation from which all specific areas within a field evolve, and because they establish the basis for interrelationships among the areas, a field of study is both as strong and weak as its research and scholarship."[2]

Yet there is another, more pragmatic argument to be made for increased forensic research. Scholarship enhances the image of forensics both within the field of speech communication and in the larger academic context. Many colleagues feel that we are merely, in the words of Plato, teaching a "knack" which is not worthy of academic treatment. This negative image may be changed if the forensic tournament is viewed as a place to study the relationship between communication/rhetorical theory and practice. The link between these two academic entities is obvious, since they "are best served when progress in one informs the development of the

[1]"Report of the Committee on the Rationale for Forensics," James McBath and Robert E. Rosenthal, co-chairs. This unpublished document was developed during the National Developmental Conference on Forensics. Sections from the report form the basis for "Rationale for Forensics," by James McBath, found in *American Forensics in Perspective* (Annandale, Virginia: Speech Communication Association, 1985).

[2]James McBath, ed., *Forensics as Communication: The Argumentative Perspective* (Skokie, Illinois: National Textbook Company, 1975), p. 34.

other."[3] The forensic tournament is the perfect opportunity to conduct such research — a potential laboratory for inquiry which could add much to the field of speech communication.

The key concern is to develop scholarship which is appropriate for the field of forensics. As Polk and Parson argued in the Sedalia report: "Certainly, the role of research in forensics should be modified and improved, but the kind of research must be consistent with the interests and abilities of the educators in forensics."[4] Understanding this rather emphathetic admonition, we should ask what areas of inquiry seem to be most appropriate from the perspective of individual events?

There are at least six potential individual event areas in which scholars may contribute to the greater field of speech communication. The first of these has been suggested above: using the forensic tournament as a laboratory to study the relationship between theory and practice. Tournaments provide an outstanding opportunity to examine the principles of persuasion, competition, argumentation, ethos, and a host of other theoretical perspectives. Given proper safeguards, this can be accomplished without significantly altering the educational experience of the tournament participants.

A second major focus for research would be to study the relationship between what we teach in forensics and the knowledge we need to succeed in the "outside world." For years, forensics has been justified as an activity which teaches necessary "life-skills." Yet the 1974 Project Delphi inquiry noted a deficiency of research in this area which, sadly, is still the case some eight years later. In Project Delphi's view, "Forensics needs hard evidence regarding the transfer value of forensics participation"[5] to the world beyond academia. With the current pragmatic emphasis upon measurable competency development in higher education, this appears to be a particularly important area of inquiry.

A third area for research would be concerned with how human beings process information. Unfortunately, "information processing" has been used in the pejorative sense to describe certain delivery practices in debate. The concept we suggest for research in "information processing" is best explained by Samuel Becker as "the way in which individuals integrate increments of information to which they are exposed; integrate them with each other and with other stimuli they have stored previously; the way in which they

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[3]*Forensics as Communication,* p. 22.

[4]Lee Polk and Donn Parson, "Responses to Research and Scholarship in Forensics," *Forensics as Communication,* p. 137.

[5]"Project Delphi Statements," *Forensics as Communication,* p. 75.

create meaning from these stimuli; and the ways in which these meanings are stored and retrieved."[6] The events of Extemporaneous and Impromptu Speaking seem to be especially appropriate categories for such research.

A fourth potential area for scholarship would be pedagogy. The tournament provides a laboratory for testing the effectiveness of teaching techniques. In essence, forensic educators do this at an individual level when formulating coaching strategies for team members. An expansion of this individualistic effort could include, for example, a discussion of alternative competitive formats or the comparison of a variety of pedagogical techniques.

A fifth area for study would be that of decision-making. Information might be obtained regarding the role of values in this process by studying judging criteria in various events. How does subject expertise affect the evaluation made by a judge? What makes students establish preferences for a certain event category? The relationship between style and substance and ballot decisions appears to be particularly fertile ground for research.

Finally, there is a need to develop a theory of forensics. Is it applicable to the "real world"? Is it merely an intellectual "sport"? Are there certain communication principles peculiar to the activity? What are the assumptions of forensics regarding human behavior? There is a need for a definition of forensics beyond the realm of lexicography. To be viewed as academically legitimate, forensics should claim theoretical grounding. Ultimately, the activity is judged by scholars, and the only way to shed its sophistic image is through the establishment of theoretical underpinnings.

Although the thrust of this essay is in the direction of empirical research, scholars in forensics should also utilize more traditional rhetorical or historical methodologies in the conduct of their inquiries. The kinds of questions asked will inevitably determine the methodological approaches used in research. While traditional, rhetorical research and empirical inquiry may both be equally enlightening, the notion of viewing the forensic tournament as a laboratory poses peculiar problems for the empiricist.

In individual events, it may well be that the national forensic organizations (the National Forensic Association, the American Forensic Association's National Individual Events Tournament) must come to grips with the difficult questions of how to foster empirical research and cope with the attendant problems of its implementations without jeopardizing the rights of student competitors, judge-critics, or tournament managers. While research

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[6]Samuel L. Becker, "Research Needs in Forensic Communication," *Forensics as Communication,* p. 60.

design is and always will be the primary concern of the researcher, the national forensic organizations must bear some responsibility for formulating guidelines which protect the competitive nature of the national competitions while providing a framework in which serious forensic scholarship can flourish.

Many scholars see the N.F.A. National Championship Tournament as an ideal opportunity for research projects. In the last five years, the N.F.A. has received an average of six research requests per year. Typical petitions for research projects involve the taping of elimination rounds, distribution of various questionnaires, contacting individual students for manuscripts, and reproduction of ballots and comment sheets. Unfortunately, the N.F.A. lacks a coherent policy for dealing with these research requests. Although some proposals have been made in advance, the majority have occurred immediately prior to the start of competition, or even after the tournament had commenced. As a result, these requests received little scrutiny, and there was little time to suggest revisions in the research proposal. The net effect of late submission and lack of review standards has been to discourage research at the national tournament. Each of the four research requests submitted in 1984 was either withdrawn, altered in scope, or significantly restructured after last-minute N.F.A. Executive Council objections. This is not to say that the N.F.A. is anti-research; rather, it is indicative of the problems associated with the lack of policy to guide researchers as they conceive, organize, and implement research proposals. In each of the above instances, the N.F.A. had sound, logical reasons for objecting to the research request. Many of these objections involved issues of informed consent, sound tournament management, and confidentiality of tournament data. But the impact of the non-policy on research is that virtually no research was conducted at the 1984 tournament and valuable opportunities for inquiry were lost.

Clearly we cannot permit research at nationals to supplant the principal goals of the tournament: education and competition. Nor can we permit ill-conceived or misguided research to detract from positive student and judge-critic experiences. Fortunately, we do not need to ban research to safeguard the experience of the students, coaches, or judges either in terms of education or competition. With an established, well-defined research policy, we can protect tournament participants and still foster worthwhile productive forensic research.

If we think about the role of the student, the researcher and the activity, we must conclude that what we find is a classic opportunity, a situation that any scholar would agree is or could become

a living laboratory for the advancement of the field, growth of knowledge, and for the testing of hypotheses. With this opportunity, however, comes a responsibility — a responsibility to protect the integrity of the activity and the rights of the student subject.

Over the many years that scholars have been conducting research, the issue of ethical standards has been a source of concern. Various professions have sought to impose restrictions and guidelines on the research practices of its members. These guidelines are designed not only to protect research subjects from well-intentioned projects whose long range side effects could not be fully understood but also to insure that perspective researchers provide important information to subjects.[7] For example, in 1973 the American Psychological Association, in an effort to respond to these issues, published guidelines for the use of human subjects in the conduct of research by its members. Those responsible for these rules found compelling reasons to protect the subjects involved in research. In summary, the guidelines suggested that strict adherence to ethical standards in planning and conducting research was critical and that researchers had obligations to their subjects as well as to their profession.

Claire Selltiz describes ten questionable practices involving human subjects that should be considered before any organization formulates a research policy:

1. That researchers might involve subjects without their knowledge;
2. That researchers might withhold important information about the nature of the research from the subject;
3. That researchers might give misleading information to the subjects regarding the nature of the research;
4. That researchers might deceive the participant;
5. That the researcher might construct a project that would lead to a diminishment of the subject's self respect;
6. That the researcher might violate the subject's right to self determination;
7. That the researcher might create a situation that leads to either or both excessive physical or mental stress;

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[7]Further information on the protection of human subjects in the conduct of empirical research, maybe found in the following publications: Donald Ary, *Introduction to Research in Education* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston), 1972; *Ethical Principles in the Conduct of Research With Human Participants* (Wahsington, D.C.: American Psychological Association), 1973; Abraham K. Korman, *Organizational Behavior* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc.), 1971; Joan Sieber, *N.I.H. Readings on the Protection of Human Subjects in Behavior and Social Science Research* (Frederick, M.D.: University Publications of America,) 1984.

8. That the researcher might invade the privacy of the subject;

9. That the researcher might withhold some benefit from the control group; and;

10. That the researcher might not treat the subjects fairly or show them consideration and respect.[8]

Some might think that questionable research practices are confined to experiments in psychology, but concern for protection of human subjects must be paramount in any research environment. In forensics, researchers could seriously diminish the educational experience of students by involving them in demeaning or embarrassing research situations. Misintended research might easily force judges into questionable educational practices or sway them in their competitive deliberation. Unrestricted research could easily undermine competitive outcomes of a tournament and thus destroy the laboratory which makes forensic research possible and desirable.

Even if we assume that most investigations will fall within the realm of acceptable research behavior, we should nevertheless develop safeguards to prevent misguided, misintended or otherwise questionable research practices. Consider the following scenarios:

A researcher hypothesizes that the probability of success in After Dinner Speaking is increased by positive audience response. To test the hypothesis, the researcher proposes to have a number of non-participants observe various After Dinner Speaking rounds and positively respond to selected student presentations. The observers would not respond to the remainder of the presentations. The researcher will verify this hypothesis by the ranking of the positively responded-to presentations versus non-responded-to presentations. Although this might seem to be a relevant topic of inquiry, the research design risks competitive distortions of the tournament and fails to provide information to participants. If judges are informed prior to the experiment that selected presentations will receive special audience response, then the validity of their reactions to the presentations are altered. If no prior warning is given and the hypothesis is correct, then some students have obtained a competitive advantage over others because of the research project.

An investigation is conducted to determine if academic rank is a significant indicator of the criteria employed to judge various events. Further, the researcher requests that nationals judge assignments be made so that judges with earned doctorates be assigned to judge with graduate students. The researcher then proposes to examine student comment sheets during the tournament to determine if different evaluative criteria were employed by the two groups of judges. The design of this research asks tournament officials to violate their

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[8]Claire Selltiz, ed., *Research Methods in Social Relations,* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976), p. 202.

policy of random assignment of judges and compromise sensitive competitive data.

A researcher hypothesizes that Round 4 extemp topics are a significant factor in poor student performance in that event. To test the hypothesis, he requests competitive data on contestants after the first three rounds so that he can tape the speeches of selected students in the fourth round to determine if their rankings are based on topic bias. Sensitive tournament data would again be compromised. Even if we assume that students did not suspect the reason they were taped was based on their competitive ranking, and if we assume that a number of unsupervised research assistants would operate the taping equipment judiciously and inconspicuously, imagine the impact on a student who believes that he or she is doing well, but who is not taped.

Each of these scenarios represents actual research requests. Each is fraught with danger to the student, the judge-critic and the integrity of the tournament. Yet there currently exists no policy which protects us from this type of manipulation and questionable practice.

In order to accommodate legitimate research requests and yet protect the rights of forensic participants and the needs of a competitive tournament, the N.F.A. and other organizations which conduct national tournaments must establish a procedure for submission of research requests and a policy for review of those requests. We suggest that such a policy be structured along the following guidelines:

First, the N.F.A. should determine what, if any, research restrictions should apply to the national tournament based on research policies of the prospective host institutions. Indeed, research restrictions should be viewed as an impediment for accepting the bid for a prospective host. At any rate, the N.F.A. should be clear what latitude exists at any given nationals to conduct research.

Second, the N.F.A. should include in its letter of invitation a statement which informs all participants that they may be asked to consent to authorized research investigations by individual researchers. The letter of invitation should also make clear that the N.F.A. will record on audio and/or video tape every final round possible.

Third, the N.F.A. should routinely tape all final rounds and, based on research requests, routinely tape all elimination rounds. These tapes would be made available on a "fee-for-use" basis to all who request them. Having N.F.A. assume responsibility for taping the rounds should assure some level of quality control to safeguard students. Having the tapes themselves would aid research and promote instruction based on the excellence of the performances in elimination rounds. We suggest, however, that before taping

rounds in interpretative events, the N.F.A. should obtain a legal opinion on the issue of copyright infringement.

Fourth, the N.F.A. should establish a Research Committee charged with the sole power to authorize any audio and/or video taping of contestants as well as establish a committee which has the sole power to approve all other types of research investigations and/or formal information gathering activities which involve tournament participants. Request for authorization should be made in writing to the committee and should include a full research design and implementation proposal. Notice of need to obtain authorization should be included in the tournament invitation. Requests should be made sixty days prior to the start of the tournament.

Fifth, the N.F.A. should require that the Research Committee notify, in writing, each research applicant of the committee's decision regarding the request at least thirty days prior to the national tournament. Authors of all rejected research proposals would receive a written explanation for the committee decision and should be granted ten days for resubmission of their proposal.

Sixth, the N.F.A. should establish penalties for failure to submit a request for authorization to conduct an investigation or for failure to abide by the Research Committee decision regarding such research. Penalties might take the form of public censure or appropriate letters of reprimand submitted to the researcher's employer.

Seventh, in order to guide researchers in preparing research proposals, the N.F.A should, as a matter of policy, discourage taping of any preliminary rounds, collection or dissemination of questionnaires through the ballot process, and use of any result prior to the conclusion of the competition. The N.F.A. should also endorse in all proposals guarantees of feedback and results to all research participants, anonymous twenty-five word abstracts accompanying all questionnaires, and a caution that all researchers conduct their investigation within the bounds of propriety and with respect for all research and tournament participants.[9]

We realize that these proposals are far from a full research policy, but we believe they provide the framework for such a policy to be developed. This is clearly an initial proposal which could be used to guide a Research Committee in its evaluations of individual research proposals. The net effect of these guidelines is to insist that the N.F.A. take a more vigorous role in supporting research

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[9]The National Forensic Association adopted these research guidelines for its 1985 National Championship Tournament. The process was initially successful and with revisions will be implemented for future tournaments.

and at the same time assume a quality control function to insure propriety, fairness and respect for students and coaches when they engage in activities that are being empirically evaluated. These guidelines would also require that the N.F.A. be more systematic in its treatment of research proposals and that it continually refines the practices which are acceptable for research activity. In short, research should be accorded a more prominent and more professional role in N.F.A. decision-making. Research in forensics is much too important to be conducted haphazardly or, worse yet, not conducted at all. Yet our first concern must always be the educational and competitive experience of forensic participants. Hopefully these guidelines will help us balance the rights of participants with the needs of researchers.

Consistency versus Diversity in Tournament Events: A Survey of Coaches and Competitors

BRUCE B. MANCHESTER
and SHERYL A. FRIEDLEY*

As the level of participation in individual events as well as the competitive nature of the activity has continually strengthened during the past decade, so too have the number of local tournaments increased throughout the country. With the growth of individual events in recent years, tournament directors, coaches, and students have become increasingly interested in the diversity this activity affords. Since no national organization dictates tournament format, local tournament directors are given the opportunity to determine the individual events they will offer at a given tournament, a description of those events, and time limits for the events. As a result, tournament directors, coaches, and students have generated considerable informal discussion concerning the direction local tournaments should take in these areas.

While both the 1974 Developmental Conference on Forensics and the 1984 Developmental Conference on Forensics encouraged the development of new or "experimental" events not currently recognized by national individual events tournaments, a review of literature reveals a paucity of study concerning such development. Review of *The Quarterly Journal of Speech, Communication Monographs, Communication Education,* the *Journal of the American Forensic Association,* the *National Forensic Journal,* the *Central States Speech Journal, Communication Quarterly,* the *Southern Speech Communication Journal,* and the *Western Journal of Speech Communication* from 1970 to the present report no studies that seek to explore reactions of the forensic community concerning both the variety and nature of events offered at individual events tournaments. Because such information may be helpful in guiding tournament directors as they establish their own tournament format, the need to quantify forensic community

reactions to these issues seems appropriate. In an effort to solicit such input and initiate such study, the purpose of this research is to explore individual events coach and student reactions to the following three issues: 1) events offered at tournaments, 2) event descriptions, and 3) event time limits.

METHODOLOGY

To explore both coach and student preferences, a survey among coaches and students from thirty-two randomly selected colleges and universities representing active forensic programs in fifteen states ranging geographically from Maine to Florida was conducted by mail.[1] Of these schools, fifteen responded to provide a total return rate of 47%—a return rate considered "normal" for the use of mail questionnaires.[2] The 105 respondents in this survey included thirty-one coaches (48% were male; 52% were female) and seventy-four students who had completed at least one year of intercollegiate competition (51% were male; 49% were female). Of the respondents, 98% of the coaches and 76% of the students had attended a national tournament.

For the survey, coaches and students were asked to react to a set of comparison statements addressing three primary areas of consistency versus diversity in individual events: 1) tournaments which offer *both* national and non-national events versus tournaments which offer *only* national events; 2) a nationally-accepted description of events versus events with descriptions developed by individual tournament directors; and 3) nationally-accepted time limits for events versus time limits determined by individual tournament directors. In each of these general areas, respondents reacted to four separate statements generated from the following constructs: 1) tournament attendance, 2) educational value, 3) energy expended, and 4) quality of competition. Using a seven point Likert-type summated scale, responses ranged from "strongly disagree" as a "1" to "strongly agree" as a "7," with "4" as the "neutral" position. The order of the twelve items in the instrument as well as the order of the comparison within each item was determined by a random selection process (see Survey). Because this study is an initial investigation of the topic and the sample size

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[1]States included in the survey were Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia.

[2]Fred N. Kerlinger, *Foundations of Behavioral Research,* 2nd ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1964), p. 414. According to Kerlinger, a return rate of 40-50% is considered "normal" in the use of mail questionnaires.

represents a limited portion of the population under investigation, only mean scores for each item were computed as a basis for descriptive comparison. Responses to the items in the survey will be presented and discussed individually.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Events Offered

Currently the American Forensic Association's National Individual Events Tournament (AFA) offers ten events while the National Forensic Association's Individual Events Nationals (NFA) offers nine events. Both tournaments provide competition in prose interpretation, poetry interpretation, dramatic duo interpretation, persuasive speaking, expository speaking, after-dinner speaking, rhetorical criticism (called communication analysis at the AFA tournament), extemporaneous speaking, and impromptu speaking. In addition, the AFA tournament offers competition in dramatic interpretation. Thus, a tournament throughout the year which includes *only* national events would offer any or all of these events. While there are tournaments that offer *only* these events, tournaments may offer all or a portion of these events combined with any number of non-national events such as epideictic speaking, original poetry, literary criticism, readers' theatre, and impromptu sales.

INDIVIDUAL EVENTS SURVEY*

We are conducting a survey of both coach and student attitudes toward individual events. Complete respondent anonymity will be preserved. Thank you for your assistance in our research.

Upon completion, please return the survey to your coach as quickly as possible.

1. In working with events that are offered at the national championships, I would prefer to attend tournaments which offer a description of events developed by individual tournament directors rather than a nationally-accepted description of events.

2. I would prefer to attend tournaments which offer *only* national events rather than tournaments which offer *both* national and non-national events.

3. In working with events that are offered at the national championships, the educational experience provided by events using nationally-accepted time limits is stronger than the educational experience provided by events with time limits determined by individual tournament directors.

4. In working with events that are offered at the national championships, I would prefer to attend tournaments which use nationally-accepted time limits for events rather than time limits for events determined by individual tournament directors.

5. I would prefer to focus my energy on *both* national and non-national events rather than *only* national events.

6. In working with events that are offered at the national championships, I would prefer to focus my energy on events with nationally-accepted descriptions rather than events with descriptions developed by individual tournament directors.

7. In working with events that are offered at the national championships, I would prefer to focus my energy on events with time limits determined by individual tournament directors rather than events using nationally-accepted time limits.

8. The educational experience provided by tournaments offering *only* national events is stronger than the educational experience provided by tournaments offering *both* national and non-national events.

9. In working with events that are offered at the national championships, the educational experience provided by events described by individual tournament directors is stronger than the educational experience provided by events using nationally-accepted descriptions.

10. In working with events that are offered at the national championships, the quality of competition in events using nationally-accepted descriptions is stronger than the quality of competition in events described by individual tournament directors.

11. In working with events that are offered at the national championships, the quality of competition in events with time limits determined by individual tournament directors is stronger than in events using nationally-accepted time limits.

12. The quality of competition at tournaments offering *both* national and non-national events is stronger than the quality of competition at tournaments offering *only* national events.

Please complete the following demographic data:

Current Individual Events Participation: Coach _____ Student ___

Sex: Female ___ Male _____

Attended a National Collegiate
Individual Events Tournament: Yes _____ No _____

Please feel free to make any additional comments on the reverse side of this sheet.

Editor's note: To conserve space the rating scale was omitted after each question.

Items 2, 5, 8, and 12 on the questionnaire focused on the events offered at individual events tournaments. For the purpose of clarity in this discussion of events offered, the order of the comparison within all items as well as the scores on the Likert-type scales have been converted to reflect the comparative perspective of preference for offering *both* national and non-national events at tournaments. On question item 2, "I would prefer to attend tournaments which offer *both* national and non-national events rather than tournaments which offer *only* national events," the subjects' mean response was 5.2. A majority of both coaches (C) and students (S) prefer to attend tournaments that offer *both* national and non-national events (C = 5.2; S = 5.2) suggesting a general preference for diversity of events offered.

On question item 5, "I would prefer to focus my energy on *both* national and non-national events rather than *only* national events," the subjects' mean response was 5.0. Again, a majority of both coaches and students prefer to expend forensic energy on *both* national and non-national events, though student preference in this area is not as strong as coach preference (C = 5.0; S = 4.9) on this item.

When responding to question item 8, "the educational experience provided by tournaments offering *both* national and non-national events is stronger than the educational experience provided by tournaments offering *only* national events," the subjects' mean response was 5.4. While student respondents demonstrated a stronger preference on this item, a majority of both coaches and students prefer the educational experience provided by tournaments that offer such diversity (C = 5.2; S = 5.4).

Finally, on question item 12, "the quality of competition at tournaments offering *both* national and non-national events is stronger than the quality of competition at tournaments offering *only* national events," the subjects' mean response was 4.3—the most neutral response in the survey. In addition, this question item reflects the greatest disparity between coaches and students (C = 3.8; S = 4.6)—a mean difference of .8. Students perceive a higher quality of competition at tournaments offering such diversity compared with those tournaments offering only national events while forensic coaches do not perceive such quality.

Overall, with a mean of 5.0, both coaches and students expressed a preference for tournaments that offer diversity—*both* national and non-national events rather than tournaments that offer *only* national events. Perhaps it is most interesting to note that the respondents' strongest preference for tournaments that offer

diversity rests with the perceived educational value these events provide while the weakest preference for these tournament event offerings focus on the quality of competition at tournaments that offer diversity of events. This discrepancy may suggest that there is perceived educational value in providing a variety of events in which students may compete, but to do so may weaken the quality of that educational experience.

Description of Events

Language choice in the majority of the event descriptions are similar for both the AFA tournament and the NFA tournament. Perhaps the greatest difference in the description of events occurs in the rhetorical criticism/communication analysis event. At the NFA tournament, a "critical methodology" must be employed while the AFA tournament allows the use of any "rhetorical communication principles." In addition, while a manuscript may be used at the AFA tournament, a manuscript is not permitted at the NFA tournament. Finally, judges at the NFA tournament are permitted to ask a question at the conclusion of the speech, but the AFA tournament rules do not include a provision for such a question.

Regardless of these minor discrepancies, most coaches and contestants would probably agree that there is general consistency in the description of events between the two national tournaments; in fact, contestants who attend both national tournaments are usually able to use the same material in a given event for both tournaments. While the event descriptions developed for the two national tournaments may be somewhat consistent, however, there is nothing to prevent individual tournament directors from developing their own event descriptions. For example, an interpretive event description may vary in the literary period from which the selection may be drawn, the number of selections permitted, the number of characters permitted, the use of manuscript, and the use of movement, as well as props, in the interpretation process. Original event descriptions may vary on specific purpose of the speech, style of delivery (i.e., memorized, notes, manuscript), and use of audio-visual aids. Event descriptions developed by individual tournament directors can provide considerable diversity in the activity.

Items 1, 6, 9, and 10 on the questionnaire focused on the description of events offered at individual events tournaments. For the purpose of clarity in this discussion of the description of events, the order of the comparison with all items as well as the scores on the Likert-type scale have been converted to reflect the comparative

perspective of preference for a nationally-accepted description of events. On question item 1, "I would prefer to attend tournaments which offer a nationally-accepted description of events rather than a description of events developed by individual tournament directors," the subjects' mean response was 5.0. A majority of both coaches and students prefer to attend tournaments that use a nationally-accepted description of events (C = 5.3; S = 4.9), indicating a general preference for consistency in this area. Since coaches indicate a considerably stronger preference for consistency in event descriptions than do students, these findings may indicate that a large portion of the responsibility for adapting material for a variety of event descriptions rests with coaches who perceive it as a burden.

When responding to question item 6, "I would prefer to focus my energy on events with nationally-accepted descriptions rather than events with descriptions developed by individual tournament directors," the subjects' mean response was 5.2. A majority of both coaches and students prefer to expend their energy on events that use a nationally-accepted description. Of the items that focus on the description of events, this item reflects the greatest disparity between coach and student preference (C = 5.5; S = 5.0). Coaches clearly prefer to expend their energy on events with nationally-accepted descriptions rather than events with descriptions developed by the individual tournament directors. This strong preference for consistency from coaches may serve to reinforce the importance of national recognition for programs and schools—a perspective probably more appreciated by coaches than students.

On question item 9, "the educational experience provided by events using nationally-accepted descriptions is stronger than the educational experience provided by events described by individual tournament directors," the subjects' mean response was 4.8. While a majority of both coaches and students prefer the educational experience provided by a nationally-accepted description of events, this preference is not as strong as preferences expressed on tournament attendance and energy expended (C = 4.7; S = 4.9).

Finally, in responding to question item 10, "the quality of competition in events using nationally-accepted descriptions is stronger than the quality of competition in events described by individual tournament directors," the subjects' mean response was 4.9. Again, while a majority of both coaches and students perceive the quality to be stronger with events using nationally-accepted descriptions, students indicate a stronger commitment to that position than do coaches (C = 4.8; S = 5.0).

Overall, with a mean of 5.0, both coaches and students expressed a preference for tournaments that adhere to the consistency of nationally-accepted event descriptions rather than the diversity of descriptions developed by the individual tournament directors. The area in which both coaches and students express the strongest preference refers to energy expended on these events; both prefer to expend energy on events that reflect a nationally-accepted description.

Time Limits

While there has previously been diversity in time limits between the AFA tournament and the NFA tournament, in recent years both tournaments have adopted a ten-minute maximum time limit for all events except extemporaneous and impromptu speaking. In these two events, both tournaments adhere to a seven minute maximum time limit. This consistency, however, is not necessarily reflected in local tournaments held throughout the country. Some tournament directors specify minimum time limits as well as employing maximum time limits that may be less than those used at the national tournaments. For example, one local tournament might set the time limit for after-dinner speaking at 6-8 minutes while another tournament might set it at 9 minutes maximum or one tournament might set impromptu speaking at 6 minutes maximum while another tournament sets it at 10 minutes maximum. As a result, coaches and students are expected to develop and/or modify material to accommodate these varying time limits from one tournament to the next.

Items 3, 4, 7, and 11 on the questionnaire focused on the time limits used at individual events tournaments. For the purpose of clarity in this discussion of time limits, the order of the comparison within all items as well as the scores on the Likert-type scale have been converted to reflect the comparative perspective of preference for nationally-accepted time limits. On question item 4, "I would prefer to attend tournaments which use nationally-accepted time limits for events rather than time limits for events determined by individual tournament directors," the subjects' mean response was 5.9. A majority of both coaches and students prefer to attend tournaments that adhere to nationally-accepted time limits (C = 6.0; S = 5.8).

In responding to question item 7, "I would prefer to focus my energy on events using nationally-accepted time limits rather than on events with time limits determined by individual tournament directors," the subjects' mean response was also 5.9. A majority of both coaches and students prefer to expend their energy on events

using nationally-accepted time limits (C = 6.2; S = 5.7). Of all the items on the survey, this is the item in which coaches demonstrate the strongest preference and a mean difference of .5 stronger than students. This preference may suggest that coaches are given the heaviest burden in helping students adapt their material to varying time limits; as a result, they are opposed to the amount of energy expended on such activity.

On question item 3, "the educational experience provided by events using nationally-accepted time limits is stronger than the educational experience provided by events with time limits determined by the individual tournament directors," the subjects' mean response was 5.0. A majority of both coaches and students perceive the educational experience provided by consistent time limits to be stronger than the educational experience provided by diverse time limits. Interestingly, on this item coaches are more committed to consistency of time limits than students (C = 5.2; S = 4.9). These results suggest that coaches are often thrust into the role of adapting the students' material to time limits rather than the students themselves; as such, coaches may question the educational value of diversity in this area.

Finally, when presented with question item 11, "the quality of competition in events with time limits determined by individual tournament directors is stronger than in events using nationally-accepted time limits," the subjects' mean response was 5.1. While a majority of both coaches and students perceive the quality of competition to be stronger when using consistent time limits, students demonstrate a stronger perception of that quality than do coaches (C = 4.8; S = 5.2).

Overall, with a mean of 5.5, both coaches and students prefer nationally-accepted time limits rather than those developed by the individual tournament directors. Of the three areas explored in this survey, both coaches and students indicate the strongest preference in this area—a preference for consistency with nationally-accepted time limits.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

While this research presents a preliminary investigation into the preference of both coaches and students for consistency versus diversity in individual events, it is only the first step necessary to investigate this aspect of the forensic activity. With this initial investigation, however, the authors clearly recognize the need for continued research to identify and explore the extent to which these preferences exist as well as their impact on individual events.

First, similar research that surveys the preferences of coaches and students from across the nation should be conducted. While this study provides information concerning the preferences of coaches and students from fifteen states, these preferences may or may not be reflective of either a regional or national norm. If such preferences were to reflect the need for more diversity or more consistency in any of these areas, this research should provide the impetus for exploring the direction and focus these changes should take.

Second, data from this study suggests a preference for tournaments that offer *both* national and non-national events; however, there was no attempt in this study to explore specific non-national events that may be preferred. A survey seeking preference concerning these events might allow for the development of some consistency among these events. In addition, consistent use of specific non-national events over a period of time may provide the data necessary to justify incorporating some of these events at the national tournaments. Until such an effort is undertaken, however, any movement to develop new events for national competition may be somewhat limited in scope.

Finally, a survey among coaches and students who attend the national tournaments might explore the desirability of seeking more consistency in the events offered as well as event descriptions between these national tournaments. While the AFA tournament and the NFA tournament have moved closer together in time limits and most event descriptions, there are modifications in these two tournaments as well as other national tournaments that could be made in an effort to provide even more consistency in event descriptions and events offered.

CONCLUSION

This research provides an initial examination of both coaches and students concerning preferences for events offered, description of events, and time limits. It appears important to note that, for the most part, coach and student perceptions on the issues addressed in this survey are quite similar. Both coaches and students perceive some educational value in attending local tournaments that do not restrict their events only to those offered at the national tournaments. Both coaches and students feel that the expenditure of energy devoted to those non-national events is worthwhile. While the sample in this survey is geographically limited, preferences expressed by those surveyed clearly indicate that offering non-national events as well as national events may strengthen the

attractiveness of a tournament. The finding also seems to suggest that both coaches and students are not compelled to view their forensic experience simply in terms of events that will be utilized at a national championship level. However, when dealing with events offered at the national championship level, both coaches and students prefer standardization of event descriptions. Thus, these findings suggest that tournament directors might wish to be less "creative" in their description of events offered at local tournaments and instead rely more heavily on those descriptions developed by the national organizations.

Finally, respondents on this survey clearly prefer time limits at local tournaments that conform to those limits established at the national tournaments. Since both coaches and students in this survey strongly prefer to attend tournaments that adhere to these national time limits, the attractiveness and ultimate "draw" for a local tournament may be significantly influenced by the time limit decisions made by the local tournament director.

Comparison of Tabulation Methods Used by Two 1985 National Forensic Tournaments

ROBERT S. LITTLEFIELD*

Despite the rapid growth in popularity enjoyed by individual speaking events in competitive forensics, little research has been conducted to explore the justification for methods used to score and rank the contestants. A few speech communication textbooks (Goodnight and Zarefsky, 1980; Faules, Rieke, and Rhodes, 1976) have explained the generally accepted method of adding the ranks and ratings of several judges to provide a way for cumulatively determining the overall scores for the contestants. The students with the lowest number of ranking point totals become the winners. Conversely, when tied at the same rank, the contestants with the highest number of rating points are determined to be the winners. Various other suggestions regarding the breaking of ties have been proposed. However, such decisions have been left up to the discretion of the tournament directors.

In an effort to standardize the method used to determine the winners at the American Forensic Association's National Individual Events Tournament established in 1978, a system for determining which contestants would advance into quarterfinals was codified (Pratt, 1985). Two judges were used in each section of three preliminary rounds to evaluate the contestants. The lowest rank of the six judges, along with the lowest rating of the six (not necessarily on the same ballot), were dropped. When the preliminary rounds were completed, the top 24 contestants emerged and advanced into a quarterfinal round. At this point, the contestants were "seeded" into four sections (McRoberts, 1983), or three sections depending upon the number of contestants qualifying to participate in the event.

Recently the Pi Kappa Delta National Forensic Honorary Fraternity was encouraged to adopt the AFA-NIET procedure of dropping the low rank and low rating to determine the contestants

Webmaster's Note: There was a printing error that made Table 3 difficult to follow in the original. It has been changed here to make it easier to follow.

who would finish in the top 10 percent (receiving Superior Awards) or next 20 percent (receiving Excellent Awards). Currently, Pi Kappa Delta utilizes two judges in each of three preliminary rounds as a basis for ordering the contestants into the two award categories. All six rankings and rating points are included in the final computations for each contestant.

The arguments to support the justification for adopting the AFA policy of dropping low rank and low rating points being proposed by AFA members within the Pi Kappa Delta organization can be grouped into three main areas: (1) The low rank and rating should be dropped because judges from different regions of the country prefer various styles of delivery of presentation. Elimination of the low rank and low rating would be fairer for students who experienced inconsistent or skewed judging in their rounds. (2) Every rank and rating is statistically significant for a contestant. One low rank or low rating might keep a student from advancing and/or placing. (3) The addition of five ranks and ratings is more expeditious than adding six ranks and ratings for those working in the tournament tabulation room.

While not supported empirically, these reasons have provided a basis for the adoption and retention by the AFA-NIET of the drop policy. To find support for these arguments, the present study is designed to test the following hypothesis:

H0: There is no correlation between contestants placing with six ranks/six ratings and those placing with five ranks/ five ratings.

H1: There is a correlation between contestants placing with six ranks/six ratings and those placing with five ranks/five ratings.

A high correlation would indicate that dropping the low rank and rating makes little difference in the contestants who eventually place or advance. A low correlation would suggest that dropping the low rank and rating makes a difference, resulting in different people placing or advancing in the contest.

Method of Analysis

To test the hypothesis, the results of the 1985 AFA-NIET and the 1985 Pi Kappa Delta National Tournament were compiled using the two methods previously described. The top 24 contestants after the preliminary rounds of the AFA-NIET were determined using the five rank/five rating system (5R/5R). The top 24 contestants were then determined using the six rank/six rating system (6R/6R) utilized by the Pi Kappa Delta Tournament. Similarly, the superior award winners after the preliminary rounds of the Pi Kappa Delta Tournament were determined using the 6R/6R system. The top 10

percent of the contestants were also determining using the 5R/5R system advocated by the AFA-NIET. The Spearman's Rank Correlation Test (Daniel, 1978), was used to determine if there were correlations between the top groups of award winners at each of the national tournaments being examined in this study.

Results

One dimension of the results must address the number of students who moved into or out of the award categories on the basis of using the different computational formats (see Table 1).

TABLE 1
Movement of Contestants Into and Out of Award Categories
Using Different Methods of Tabulation

Event Category	AFA-NIET 5R/5R to 6R/6R			Pi Kappa Delta 6R/6R to 5R/5R		
	n*	out	in	n**	out	in
Persuasive Speaking	24	1	1	10	1	1
Prose Interpretation	24	2	2	15	1	1
Extemp Speaking	24	1	1	11	3	3
Informative Speaking	24	1	1	10	1	1
Dramatic Interpretation	24	1	1	11	3	3
Dramatic Duo	24	1	1	8	1	1
Poetry Interpretation	24	1	1	14	2	2
Communication Analysis	24	0	0	5	1	1
After Dinner Speaking	24	1	1	7	0	0
Discussion	not offered as an event			6	1	1
Impromptu	24	1	1	13	1	1

* Total number of contestants advancing into quarterfinal rounds.
** Total number of contestants in Superior Award category.

At the AFA-NIET, contestants moved into or out of the quarterfinals based upon the different tabulation methods. The Prose Interpretation category experienced the greatest percentage of contestants affected by a change in computational method with two who had originally advanced to quarterfinals being replaced by two who had been excluded. Eight of the events had only one contestant originally advancing to quarterfinals being replaced by

one not advancing. In Communication Analysis, there was no change in the individuals advancing to quarterfinals using both methods of computation. At the Pi Kappa Delta Tournament contestants moved into or out of the Superior Award category. The two categories experiencing the greatest percentage of contestants affected were Extemporaneous Speaking and Dramatic Interpretation. In each of these categories, three contestants who had been recognized as Superior Award winners were replaced by three contestants who had been awarded Excellent ratings. Seven of the categories had only one contestant originally recognized as a Superior speaker be replaced by one who had received an Excellent Award. In After Dinner Speaking, there was no change in award winners using both methods of computation.

The determination of the top contestants in each category was completed using the two methods of computation suggested by the AFA-NIET and Pi Kappa Delta. Based upon the pairs of scores for each contestant, Spearman's Rank Correlation was calculated for the different individual events (see Table 2).

TABLE 2

Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient

Event Category	Pi Kappa Delta 6R/6R to 5R/5R	AFA-NIET 5R/5R to 6R/6R
Persuasive Speaking	.7363	.8976
Prose Interpretation	.6735	.9514
Extemp Speaking	.6615	.6615
Informative Speaking	.7000	.9115
Dramatic Interpretation	.6395	.9169
Dramatic Duo	.8166	.9515
Poetry Interpretation	.8294	.9238
Communication Analysis	.8285	.9817
After Dinner Speaking	.8214	.9361
Discussion	.8928	not offered as an event
Impromptu Speaking	.6395	.8646

The correlation coefficients for the events at the AFA-NIET ranged from a low of .6615 (Extemporaneous Speaking) to a high of .9817 (Communication Analysis). For the Pi Kappa Delta Tourna-

ment, the correlation coefficients varied from a low of .6395 (Dramatic Interpretation) to a high of .8928 (Discussion). In general, each of the correlation coefficients was strong enough to suggest that the two methods of computation did not produce groups of award winners who varied dramatically in their placement or advancement in the respective AFA-NIET and Pi Kappa Delta Tournaments.

Another dimension of the results focuses upon the rankings of those contestants who were displaced using the different methods of tabulation and how the shift in placement for those advancing into quarterfinals at the AFA-NIET might have affected the final winners in the events.

The shift in rankings for those moving into or out of the award categories at the AFA-NIET occurred most frequently within the group of contestants who ranked from 20 to 27 using the alternate method of tabulation. At the Pi Kappa Delta tournament, those affected by the alternate method of tabulation varied by event. However, the greatest shifts in rank occurred in Extemporaneous Speaking and Informative Speaking (see Table 3).

These findings suggest that those placing highest in each event would have been unaffected by the use of an alternate method of tabulation and would have retained their status as the top contestants or award winners after the preliminary rounds of competition.

While having little impact upon the actual award recipients, the alternate methods of tabulation would have changed the seeding of the contestants at the AFA-NIET substantially. While no seeding is done at the Pi Kappa Delta tournament, the final placing of contestants would have been altered in each of the events (see Table 4).

The argument that a shift in the quarterfinal seeding at the AFA-NIET would have been detrimental to those students who should have advanced into additional elimination rounds was addressed by McRoberts in his study. He concluded his analysis by utilizing Spearman's Rank-order Correlation Coefficent and suggested that the link between quarterfinal seed and quarterfinal finish was dubious. Similarly, in semifinals and finals, the correlations between seeding and finish were low. He wrote: "Based upon the statistical analysis of the results from the first five years of the [AFA-NIET] tournament, one should not assume that the best among the competition are necessarily advanced to the final round in each event" (p. 50). Human variables, such as the demands of time placed upon contestants and judges at the tournament, the subjective preferences of the judges, speaking order, differences in

TABLE 3

Shift in Overall Rank for Contestants
Moving Into or Out of Award Categories

Event	AFA-NIET*			Pi Kappa Delta**		
	Contestant	5R/5R to	6R/6R	Contestant	6R/6R to	5R/5R
		Rank	Rank		Rank	Rank
Persuasive	A	24	27	A	9+	16
Speaking	B	26	21	B	12	7
Prose	A	23	25	A	7+	16
Interpretation	B	24	26	B	18	12
	C	25	23			
	D	26	20			
Extemp	A	24	25	A	8+	15
Speaking	B	26	22	B	9+	12
				C	11+	13
				D	14	4
				E	15	10
				F	19	11
Informative	A	23	25	A	8+	11
Speaking	B	25	22	B	19	9
Dramatic	A	22	27	A	7+	14
Interpretation	B	25	22	B	10+	12
				C	11+	13
				D	12	7
				E	13	8
				F	14	9
Dramatic Duo	A	23	25	A	8+	11
	B	25	23	B	10	5
Poetry	A	24	25	A	13+	17
Interpretation	B	27	23	B	14+	18
				C	15	14
				D	16	10
After Dinner	A	23	25	no shift occurred		
	B	25	23			
Impromptu	A	24	25	A	12+	14
	B	25	24	B	14	6
Communication	no shift occurred			A	4+	6
Analysis				B	6	5
Discussion	not offered as an event			A	6+	7
				B	7	5

Contestants ranked 1 thorugh 24 advanced into quarterfinals in all
events at the 1985 AFA-NIET.
Contestants marked with a (+) received a superior award at the 1985 Pi
Kappa Delta tournament.

TABLE 4

Percentage of Contestants Experiencing a Change in Ranking Due to
the Use of an Alternative Tabulation Method

Event	AFA-NIET 5R/5R to 6R/6R	Pi Kappa Delta 6R/6R to 5R/5R
Persuasive Speaking	20/24 = 83%	6/10 = 60%
Prose Interpretation	23/24 = 96%	13/15 = 87%
Extemp Speaking	20/24 = 83%	10/11= 91%
Informative Speaking	23/24 = 96%	10/10 = 100%
Dramatic Interpretation	21/24 = 88%	10/11= 91%
Dramatic Duo	22/24 = 92%	3/8 = 38%
Poetry Interpretation	21/24 = 88%	11/14 = 79%
After Dinner Speaking	20/24 = 83%	4/7 = 57%
Impromptu Speaking	21/24 = 88%	10/13 = 77%
Communication Analysis	12/24 = 50%	2/5 = 40%
Discussion	not offered as an event	2/6 = 33%

the events, and the stratification used in the scheduling of pre-liminary rounds were discussed as factors which may have caused the seeding method being used to not reflect the actual quality or potential success of an individual contestant.

Consequently, despite the large percentages of contestants experiencing shifts in seeding position at the 1985 AFA-NIET, the impact of an alternate tabulation method in this study makes little difference on the overall determination of who the individual winners would be.

Conclusions

This study was designed to test the hypothesis that there is no correlation between those placing with 6 ranks/6 ratings and those placing with 5 ranks/5 ratings. The high correlation coefficients suggest that similar groups of contestants would have emerged without dropping the low rank and low rating at the AFA-NIET. Also, for the most part, similar groups of award winners would have received Superior Ratings even if the low rank and rating would have been dropped at the Pi Kappa Delta Tournament.

These results do not support the rationale suggested by advocates of the 5R/5R rating system of tabulation. While judges from different regions of the country may prefer different styles of

delivery or presentation (Lewis and Larsen, 1981; Mills, 1983), the number of judge scores perhaps serves as a means for countering one score that might not be consistent with the other five. Just as three judge scores may balance out a ranking split of a first place and a fifth place that might be possible if only two judges hear a contestant at a tournament, so may five relatively high ranks counteract the impact of one low rank from one judge. Certainly, one would not discount the argument that each rank and rating is important in the overall determination of a contestant's final placing. However, the results of this study suggest that a relatively small percentage of students were affected by the inclusion of all six judges' ranks and ratings. Finally, the ease and expediency with which one might add five ranks and ratings may be out-weighed by the time that it takes to go through all of the results to scratch the low rank and low rating for each contestant after the three rounds and six judges have evaluated the contestant's performance.

One reason to support the 5R/5R method of tabulation not previously advanced is what this author considers to be the "psychological effect" the dropping of a score may have upon the contestant involved. If contestants sense that a particular judge is not fond of their selections or compositions, knowing that the unfavorable ranking will be dropped may reduce the anxiety the students may experience in a round of competition. Also, if a contestant has prior knowledge that a judge consistently uses lower-than-average points for rating contestants, the knowledge that the lowest rating points will be dropped may help the student feel less anxious about performing in a round. Due to the subjective nature of the evaluation process, this psychological dimension for the contestant is one which deserves consideration when deter-mining which framework for tabulation is selected by tournament directors.

Directions for future research in this area might address the nature of the events (manuscript, limited preparation, memorized) to determine if this is a variable in the final groupings of award winners. The self-reported anxiety on the part of the contestants could also be explored when faced with judges perceived to be negatively inclined toward a particular contestant.

To broaden the scope of future studies addressing the tabulation methods used at national tournaments, other constituencies might be considered. The National Forensic Association's National Championships and the DSR-TKA National Tournament could be compared to determine if larger populations reflect more variance in who advances and who does not. In addition, future studies may

examine the variance in the rankings of individuals who may have had one judge who skewed their overall totals to determine if this provides justification for the retention of the 5R/5R system of tabulation.

Tournament management continues to be a somewhat neglected area in the field of forensic research. However, the impact of differing tabulation methods remains as an important dimension for competitors and coaches who are interested in learning more about how winners are determined at national and regional forensic tournaments. This study has suggested that although the methods of tabulation may have differed, the results in these two national tournaments would have remained essentially the same.

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Does Speaking Order Matter in Individual Events Competition?

JEROLD L. HALE and
FRANKLIN J. BOSTER*

The belief by forensic mentors and competitors that speaking order influences competitive outcomes is not new. Concern about order effects was significant enough to prompt Franklin Knower to investigate the issue four decades ago, and that concern still exists today.[1] Tournament lore is replete with stories of competitors, sometimes at the urging of a coach, arriving late to a round of competition. While some lack of punctuality is due to double and triple entries, some competitors try to improve their speaking position and, hence, the critic's evaluation. But does speaking order really influence competitive outcomes?

To answer this question we will review the available research findings on order effects in forensic competition. We know of four studies that address the issue of order effects. Those studies have produced seemingly inconsistent and contradictory findings. A closer examination of the research, however, indicates that the findings are consistent, and that the impact of speaking order is weak.

Our discussion of the body of research will progress chronologically. A brief discussion of each study will be presented and followed by a summary of the research findings.

Knower, 1940

The data for Knower's study of order effects were ranks assigned to competitors in the National tournaments of the National Forensic League, Phi Rho Pi, the Northern Oratorical League, the Intercollegiate Oratorical Association, and Pi Kappa Delta. He made a total of 13,265 observations. Knower reported pervasive order effects and offered several specific ranks. Finally, he posited that fourth, fifth, and sixth speakers were more likely to be assigned a rank of first than other speakers.[2]

While Knower's findings reinforced the beliefs of much of the forensic community they should be viewed with a healthy amount of skepticism. Only the frequency with which a speaking position was assigned a given rank was reported. No tests of statistical significance or measures of association were performed. Put differently, it is not possible to determine from the way the data were reported whether order effects occur with greater than chance regularity or the strength of the relationship between speaking order and rank assignments outcomes. Furthermore, the finding that extreme speaking positions are more likely to receive an intermediate rank than an extreme rank is a function of mathematical probability and not necessarily evidence of an order effect. An example will clarify this argument.

For any panel of five or more speakers the probability of being assigned an intermediate rank is greater than the probability of being assigned an extreme rank. Assume, for a moment, that the probability of being assigned any rank is equal. In a group of five speakers the probability of being assigned any rank would be .20, i.e., it would happen one-fifth of the time. The probability of being assigned an intermediate rank would be .20 multiplied by the number of intermediate ranks, in this case three. The probability of being assigned an extreme rank would be .20 multiplied by the number of extreme ranks, or two. If order had no impact on competitive outcomes the probability of receiving an intermediate rank would be .60, i.e., it would happen six times out of ten. The probability of begin assigned an extreme rank would be .40, or four times out of ten.[3] The point to be be made is that Knower's finding that first and last speakers were more likely to receive intermediate ranks than extreme ranks is expected and cannot, by itself, be evidence of an order effect.[4]

Becker, 1953

Samuel Becker attempted to provide more definitive conclusions about the impact of speaking order. He examined the relationship between speaking order and ranks assigned in 22 years of Northern Oratorical League competition. His research included a total of 660

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[3]This argument assumes that speakers were randomly assigned to speaking positions. Random assignment of speakers would mean that speaker quality should be independent of speaking position. For most tournaments this is a reasonable assumption.

[4]James A. Benson and Susan K. Maitlen, "An Investigation of the Relationship Between Speaking Order and Rank Assigment in Forensic Competition," *Journal of the American Forensic Association* 11 (1975), 183-188; Jerold L. Hale, "The Effect of Speaking Order on Rank Assignments and Quality Ratings for Extemporaneous Speeches," Speech Communication Association Convention, Anaheim, November, 1981.

observations. For each speaking position Chi-square tests were performed. The Chi-square test is a statistical significance test that indicates whether the observed rank assignments differ from expected rank assignments more than would be expected by chance.

From those data Becker argued that speaking order influenced the ranks assigned to the first three speakers but not to the latter three in panels of six, More specifically, he argued the first speaker was more likely to be assigned a rank of fourth than other ranks. The second speaker was more likely to be assigned a rank of second than other ranks, and the third speaker was more likely to be assigned a rank of fifth than other ranks. Becker's findings appear to be similar to Knower's, though the extent of the similarity is difficult to discern because of the manner in which Knower's data were reported.[5]

Benson and Maitlen, 1975

James Benson and Susan Maitlen investigated the effect of speaking order on rank assignments in three individual events tournaments. A total of 584 observations were made. For each speaking position Chi-square tests and Kolomogorov-Smirnov tests were performed. The Kolomogorov-Smirnov test, like the Chi-square test, is a test of statistical significance. It, too, determines whether or not the ranks assigned to each speaking position differ significantly from expected rank assignments. Benson and Maitlen also did separate analyses for prepared versus non-prepared events, preliminary rounds of competition, semi-final and final rounds of competition, and for different size speaking panels.

They reported speaking order had no significant impact on intermediate rank assignments, no significant impact on being ranked first or last, and no significant impact when comparing ranks assigned in prepared versus non-prepared events. The only statistically significant order effect was found when comparing preliminary rounds of competition to out rounds. One speaking position received ranks of second more often than would be expected by chance. No other order effects were found.[6]

Hale, 1982

Jerold Hale conducted the most recent investigation of order effects in forensic competition. His approach differed from the approach used in previous studies. Prior studies used data from live tournament competition. The investigation by Hale was a laboratory experiment which simulated an extemporaneous speaking

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[5]Samuel L. Becker, "The Ordinal Position Effect," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 39 (1953); 217-219; Knower, pp. 633-644.

[6]Benson and Maitlen, pp. 183-188.

contest. Six speakers gave speeches ranging in length from five to seven minutes. The speeches were videotaped. The videotapes were spliced together so that each speaker was shown in each possible speaking order. The speeches were then shown to other college students who ranked each speaker and assigned a quality rating. A total of 1,044 observations were made. Hale reported a statistically significant, but extremely weak, relationship between speaking order and both ranks and ratings. For both ranks and ratings the relationship was linear. More specifically, later speakers received rankings and ratings that improved, but only very slightly.[7]

Summary of Findings

Of the four studies conducted two argued that speaking order had a pervasive impact on the outcomes of forensic competition and two argued that the impact of speaking order was trivial. While these findings appear contradictory they are consistent and indicate the relationship between speaking order and success is weak. The seeming contradiction occurs because most of the research used statistical significance tests and not measures of association. Significance tests and measures of association provide different information, and one should not be used to the exclusion of the other when conducting quantitative research.[8] To clearly illustrate this a distinction between statistical significance tests and measures of association must be explicated.

Statistical significance tests determine whether a relationship occurs with a certain regularity. That is, significance tests indicate the likelihood of the research results being the result of chance. For example, Becker found that speaking order had a statistically significant impact on the assignment of some ranks. Statistical significance then, is another way of saying that the likelihood of findings being a chance occurrence is small.[9]

Measures of association determine the strength or magnitude of a relationship between two or more variables. It is not uncommon in forensics to hear coaches or students say that two things are correlated, i.e., the two things are associated or related. For example, coaches often times attempt to convince students that effort and performance are correlated, so that the more effort the

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[7]Hale.

[8]Harris M. Cooper, "On the Significance of Effects and the Effects of Significance," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 41 (1981), pp. 1013-1018.

[9]Becker, pp. 217-219. The conclusions we draw about the differences between significance tests and strength of effect measures are found in several statistical publications. However, the Cooper citation summarizes the issue nicely.

student puts forth the better he or she will do in competition. The most common measure of association is the Pearson Product Moment Correlation, or Pearson's r.[10] The correlation coefficient, *r*, measures the strength of a relationship. Pearson's *r* can range in numerical value from -1.00 to 1.00. If effort and performance were correlated -1.00 they would be perfectly negatively correlated. As effort increased performance quality would decrease. If the correlation between effort and performance is zero effort and performance quality would be unrelated. Finally, if effort and performance were correlated 1.00 the two would be perfectly and positively related. As effort increased performance quality would increase.

Cast in terms related to speaking order, a positive correlation between speaking order and rank assignments would indicate that later speakers would receive higher rank assignments. A negative correlation between speaking order and rank assignments would mean that later speakers received lower rank assignments. The more a correlation coefficient deviates from zero the stronger the relationship between two variables would be.

A statistically significant relationship does not mean that a relationship is strong, only that it is observed with greater than chance regularity. Statistical significance, is, in part, a function of the sample size or number of observations made. As the sample size increases statistical tests become more powerful, or more likely to detect a subtle effect if one exists. For example, in Becker's research 660 observations were made. With a sample of 660 a correlation of .08 or larger would be statistically significant. Typically, correlations of .20 or less are considered to be small effect sizes, or indicative of weak relationships.[11]

How does this discussion of the difference between statistical significance and measures of association demonstrate the consistency among diverse research findings? Two of the four studies reviewed found statistically significant order effects. While Knower did not perform statistical significance tests he reported pervasive order effects. On the other hand, three of the four studies conducted found extremely weak relationships between speaking order and competitive success. Only Knower's findings are not indicative of a weak relationship and he did not test for the strength of the relationship. Furthermore, the data are not reported in such a way to reconstruct the data set or to perform the tests in retrospect.[12]

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[10]Karl Pearson, "On the General Theory of the Influence of Selection on Correlation and Variation," *Biometrika* 8 (1911-1912), 437-443.

[11]James Cohen, *Statistical Power Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences* (New York: Academic Press, 1977).

[12]Knower, pp. 633-644.

A discussion of the effect sizes found in the other three studies would make our argument more compelling. Becker did not perform measures of association when analyzing those data.[13] He did, however, report the data with enough detail so that subsequent analyses could be conducted. When we performed those analyses the strongest correlation between speaking order and performance was r = .15. In short, Becker observed a statistically significant relationship between speaking order and competitive success but speaking order had a trivial impact on rank assignments.[14]

Benson and Maitlen did not perform measures of association in analyzing those data. It is reasonable to infer, however, that the relationship between speaking order and rank assignments was weak. While a statistically significant relationship is not an indication of a strong relationship, an insignificant relationship is indicative of a weak relationship, especially when the sample size is large. The sample size in that research was 550. The effect size in the study could not have exceeded ±.08 without producing statistically effects.[15]

Hale did perform measures of association. He used a measure of association called Eta squared which can be transformed easily to correlation coefficients. Speaking order and rank assignments were correlated r =. 12, and speaking order and quality ratings were correlated r =.08. While some might criticize the method employed in Hale's research, e.g., because it included videotaped speeches and used college students as critics, the latter of the two criticisms seems to be a further indication that speaking order has little impact. If college students with no forensic training were un-influenced by speaking order the likelihood of skilled coaches and judges being influenced by speaking order would be even smaller.[16]

The available studies do indicate that speaking order has a statistically observable impact on rank assignments and quality ratings. That finding, considered alone, is deceptive. Statistical significance tests are influenced by the sample size used in the research. As the sample size increases a significance test is more likely to detect weak relationships.[17] Using significance tests without calculating the strength of the relationship between two

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[13]Becker, pp. 217-219. We are critical of the statistical analyses used by Professors Knower and Becker. In fairness to them we should point out that measures of association received more widespread use as computer programs and algorithms simplified their calculations.

[14]Becker, pp. 217-219; A complete copy of the analyses available upon request from the first author.

[15]Benson and Maitlen, pp. 183-188.

[16]Hale.

[17]Cohen.

variables can produce misleading conclusions. The literature on order effects in forensic competition is a good example. When the strength of the relationship between speaking order and success measures is calculated the data emphatically indicate that speaking order has a trivial impact on competitive outcomes.

Some readers might be tempted, based on these results, to conclude that attempting to improve speaking position does not diminish one's chances of success and on rare occasions it could improve one's chances. That conclusion would be short sighted. Three studies report which speaking position received the best rank assignments. For each of the three studies a different speaking position is slightly better.[18] Contestants trying to improve their competitive standing by some trivial degree would merely be guessing as to an effective speaking order strategy.

A more realistic interpretation of the available research would be that time spent either worrying about one's speaking position or trying to improve positions is time wasted. That time would be more productively spent in preparation.

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[18]"Becker, pp. 217-219; Benson and Maitlen, pp. 183-188; Hale; Knower, pp. 633-644.

Oral Interpretation in Forensic Competition: Representative Papers

HAL H. HOLLOWAY, JOHN F. SKINNER,
JERRY W. MATHIS, CAROLYN KEEFE,
and JOHN J. ALLEN*

An action caucus to seek common criteria for the presentation and judging of oral interpretation in forensic competition was held during the 1982 Speech Communication Association convention at Louisville, Kentucky. Its findings were reported in the *National Forensic Journal,* and a summary was printed in the *Journal of the American Forensic Association.*[1] In 1983, at the Washington, D.C. SCA convention, a second caucus was held on the same topic. The participants were John F. Skinner, San Antonio College; Beverly Whitaker Long, University of North Carolina; John J. Allen, Wayne State University; Carolyn Keefe, West Chester University; Harold Drake, Millersville University; and Hal Holloway, Mont Alto Campus, The Pennsylvania State University. At the same convention, Task Force III of the Interpretation Division of the SCA, under the chairmanship of Jerry W. Mathis, Sauk Valley College, also presented its findings on the nature and value of oral interpretation in forensics. James A. Pearse, Baylor University, and Hal Holloway, both of whom participated in the first action caucus, contributed to those findings. Dr. Mathis, in turn, participated as a discussant in the second action caucus and with Joan

[1]See Hal H. Holloway, John Allen, Jeanine Rice Barr, Thomas Colley, Carolyn Keefe, James A. Pearse, and James M. St. Clair, "Report on the Action Caucus on Oral Interpretation in Forensic Competition," *The National Forensic Journal,* I (Spring 1983), pp. 43-58; and Hal Holloway, "Oral Interpretation — Action Caucus Report," *Journal of the American Forensic Association,* XIX (Spring 1983), pp. 273-4.

Olsen Donavan, St. Lawrence University, presented a paper at yet another presentation on oral interpretation at the 1984 SCA Convention in Chicago, Illinois. This was a panel symposium under the auspices of the National Forensic Association which reported, discussed, and offered further considerations beyond the 1982 and 1983 action caucuses. Fellow participants were Hal Holloway, John F. Skinner, Carolyn Keefe, John J. Allen, and Harold L. Drake. The purpose of this report is to present representative papers from the 1983 action caucus and the 1984 panel symposium. The papers review ideas presented at the 1982 and 1983 action caucuses and the Task Force III symposium, indicate areas of disagreement concerning the presentation and evaluation of oral interpretation, and offer new suggestions for consideration.

"Performing and Judging Contest Oral Interpretation Events: Freedoms and Constraints": John F. Skinner

At the 1983 Action Caucus on the Presentation and Judging of Oral Interpretation in Forensic Tournaments, I tried to examine some of the similarities and differences between performances of literature in classroom and contest situations. Those who choose to align themselves with either the "academic" or the "forensic" camp in this continuing dialogue or debate would do well to remember that we *all* share a history that dates back to at least the pre-Homeric "singer of tales," and that the competitive or agonistic aspect was *strong in* those early performances. The competent and stylish performer attracted large, appreciative audiences in pre-literate societies; the bungling or inept performer would be ignored, if the audience was benevolent. The Greeks and others later formalized competition in their performance contests. The focus of these early contests, however, was the literature; in preliterate societies, performances was the only way of publishing new "texts" and preserving old ones.[1]

In spite of this shared heritage, we all know that contest oral interpretation and classroom performances are two different animals today if only because they frequently look different. In a

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[1]Alfred Lord, *Singer Tales* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1960), p. 16. For additional sources on composition and performances in preliterate societies, see Eric Havelock, *Preface to Plato* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1963), and Walter Ong, *The Presence of the Word* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1967).

recent article, Ron Pelias isolates four distinct schools of inter-
pretation theory and criticism from current and recent textbooks.[2]
Educators in these various schools, he notes, view interpretation as
either 1) a *communicative act,* 2) *a performing art,* 3) an *instrument
of self-discovery,* or 4) a *mode of literary study.* Though people may
juggle more than one of these views simultaneously, the training
and criticism they provide students will typically emphasize one
basic concept of oral interpretation. Common sense dictates that
those who view interpretation as communication or as a performing
art would probably endorse or have no objection to contest oral
interpretation as currently practiced. Those viewing oral inter-
pretation as therapy or as a form of literary criticism might reject or
at least have trouble accepting the rules and restrictions typical of
forensic competition.

I am caught in the middle of this debate, and I know that I am not
alone. As a result of both my graduate training and my own
convictions, I regard performance as a particularly rich form of
literary study. Yet I also now have six years of experience coaching
and judging forensic activities. In my classroom the rules for
performance are dictated by the texts selected. I expect students to
be well-prepared, but I would never *require* an introduction or use of
a manuscript. Moreover, I would never set minimum or maximum
time limits for performance or limit movement or the use of props.
In short, I will not adopt the extrinsic rules of the contest and apply
them to classroom work. On the other hand, I know the values of
much forensic competition, and I'm not about to banish contestants
from the republic. In what follows, I want to consider briefly some
of the stated and unstated rules of *contest* performance and
judging, and the freedoms and constraints they imply for con-
testants and judges. These are *personal* reflections on excesses I've
witnessed in tournament settings, and if my opinions appear
dogmatic, it is only to spur discussion.

Freedoms of/Constraints on the Contest Performer

Freedoms	*Constraints*
1. The contestant may choose any material that fits the genre of the contest category—poetry, prose, drama.	1. Some literature is inappropriate to or unworthy of contest performance,

Selecting literature in the classroom may be limited somewhat by
the anthology in the textbook, or by the instructor's suggestions.

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[2]Ronald J. Pelias, "Schools of Interpretation Thought and Performance
Criticism," *Southern Speech Communication Journal,* 50 (Summer 1985),
pp. 348-365.

The forensic contestant has greater freedom of choice but also bears greater responsibility for choosing appropriate literature. Teachers viewing oral interpretation as literary study frequently require that all students read the selections to be performed. The forensic contestant has *no* such guarantee that the audience knows the literature and must remember that since performance is transitory, some materials may be too difficult for an audience (judge) to comprehend at first hearing. Novel or experimental literary forms that may bewilder judges are probably inappropriate for competition. Equally important, literature that is not of college anthology quality is inappropriate for collegiate competition.

2. Performers are free to choose well-known literary selections or to opt for obscure texts.	2. Both familiar and obscure selections carry risks in contest situations,

Though judges may find security in judging familiar selections, they may also be predisposed to one particular interpretation of it. I know of one particular performance of Sylvia Plath's poem "Daddy" against which I am sure I still gauge all others. This is more a testament to the power of that previous performance than a negative comment on the subsequent ones, to be sure, but the impression remains. Coaches have an obligation to expand materials in their files and to force students to select their material by themselves. If their initial selections are inappropriate for the event or the audience, *then* we lend guidance. A major contribution of forensic competition to the education of students can be forcing them to read more widely than they would otherwise. If we routinely hand students selections we deem appropriate, we discourage their reading and their analysis of the audience and the occasion.

3. Male and female contestants are free to choose literature with narrators or personae of the opposite sex.	3. Neither instructors nor performers are free to change a text to match the performer's sex.

If we are training people to achieve "effects," we can, of course, handle and manhandle literary texts any way we choose. If we purport to be studying literature, however, we will respect the intentions and the integrity of the text. You cannot change Diane Wakoski's poem "The Pink Dress" to "The Pink Overalls" and expect a judge who knows the poem to listen objectively! I want literature to serve students—by teaching them, providing pleasure,

and even winning them awards—but I bridle whenever I see poems, stories, and plays treated only as means to an end. I can learn a good deal by hearing a woman perform Robert Browning's "My Last Duchess." If she performed "My Last Duke," however, I would either laugh or cry, or both.

4. Performers are free to disregard or test the limits of contest rules and conventions.	4. Judges may enforce the rules rigidly, thus penalizing the superior performance that violates stated rules.

Why put the integrity of your performance in question by exceeding time limits or performing from memory when rules prescribe the use of a manuscript? Though I don't want those rules enforced in my classroom, I have no objection to them in the oral interpretation contest. Either play by the rules or work to have the rules changed. Teachers and students also need to be aware of unstated contest conventions because they may be important and may vary in different parts of the country.

Summary: Contest oral interpretation places a premium on the *performer* (who is expected to be not just competent, but skilled, poised, informed) and on the *audience* (whose main member, the judge, is evaluating and comparing the performances that occur). This is not to suggest that textual analysis is ignored; in fact, Carolyn Keefe's fine study suggests quite the opposite. What I *am* suggesting is that contest interpretation draws performer and judge together in an admittedly artificial, rule-bound situation and places a heavy responsibility on both of them. In a classroom students may perform selections that not everyone will "like." Winning the favor of the audience/judge becomes much more important in contests. Performers need to be aware of the necessary constraints of the contest, and in addition to analyzing their chosen literature they must analyze their potential audiences and judges.

Freedoms of/Constraints on the Judge

A major topic at both the 1982 and 1983 action caucuses was the need for qualified judges for contest oral interpretation events. But if we agree on the need for "qualified" adjudicators, we differ on what their qualifications should be.

Of course we expect judges to know basic contest rules and conventions. Yet we occasionally find hired, lay judges who telegraph their ignorance to contestants by asking (and sometimes interrupting performances to ask) simple questions about rules or

procedures. Tournament directors must assume responsibility for informing judges they hire (or conscript) of tournament rules and conventions. That alone would go a long way toward assuring that lay judges are more than warm bodies propped up with stopwatches and ballots.

Past action caucuses have discussed the idea of promoting the "theme tournament"—a wonderful concept that seems to me to combine the best of the forensic tournament and the interpretation festival. Limiting the literature to a theme or a group of writers might not only "stretch" the students to study and prepare new literature, but by limiting the range of selections would also better the odds that judges know the texts they will hear performed.

Far less workable, I believe, is the idea of having contestants submit copies of their selections before a tournament so that judges can read them. I have three practical objections and one theoretical objection to this practice: 1) Not every judge will read the material and prepare adequately for tournament rounds. Surely it is naive to assume that people who may not even read their mail or their professional journals will read and study five to eight manuscripts for a single tournament round. 2) Do students submit adaptations of the story/poem/play they are performing, or do they submit the entire work? Whatever our answer to that question, I believe that we further *complicate* contest judging if we invite overemphasis on the adaptation itself. 3) Can we arrange tournament schedules so that judges for semi-final and final rounds have time to read all the scripts they will hear performed? These are but three of the practical problems posed by this suggestion.

My theoretical objection to providing judges with copies of contestant manuscripts says something about my view of performance. Though I'd like to help assure that people are uniformly qualified to judge contest events, I am more than a little wary of talk of "uniform judging criteria." People look for different qualities in contest performances—clear diction, vocal variety, emotional development, sincerity, physical involvement—and I am hesitant to try to standardize those priorities. Why should we specify "fluency" as a judging criteria, for example, when not all of the speakers in literature are fluent? That same question could be asked of most physical and vocal elements of performance. If critics of contest oral interpretation sometimes claim that all the performances look and sound alike, won't uniform judging criteria encourage them to be even more clone-like?

In an article entitled "Cognition and Audience in a Performance Class," Beverly Whitaker Long suggests that there are at least four different types of audience members: the *target,* the *player,* the

critic, and the *performer.*[3] She arranges them from least desirable to most desirable, and from passive to active. The *target* is the audience member you either "hit" or "miss," as the name suggests. This person need know nothing about literature or the practice of oral interpretation. The *player* knows the rules of the oral inter-pretation "game" and is willing to play along: paying attention (or pretending to), applauding at the ends of performances, and so forth. The *critic,* in contrast to these first two audience types, is a person who *knows* the literature being performed and is in a position to comment on specific aspects of the text and performance. The ideal audience member, and by far the most actively involved, is the *performer:* the person who has studied the selection and also performed it. This person is in a position to know what a selection "feels" like, and to share those impressions with the performer. I mention Long's typology because it illuminates the types of judges we may encounter in interpretation contests. We can hope that our judges are critics and performers, though we sometimes encounter those who are merely targets or players. Long's model also points us toward those qualities we should try to foster in adjudicators: receptivity, critical acumen, and a knowledge of the performance phenomenon.

To my thinking, the one unforgivable sin for a contest judge is to render a ballot with nothing but a ranking and a rating. At least a venial sin is the ballot with only judgments on it: "I liked it" or "Good job!" As nice as those pats on the back are, they teach nothing. The best ballots *educate* performers by specifying *reasons* for judgments, and if we could constrain judges to do one thing, it should be that. When you tell us your reasons, we can infer your norms or values.[4] We may disagree about the importance of the things you value (and that disagreement is *healthy,* as far as I'm concerned), but unless forensic judges teach, contestants learn little or nothing about themselves, their performances, or the literature they perform.

My arguments with aspects of contest oral interpretation are not new, and I have deliberately overstated the case. Months after the most recent action caucuses and task forces were over, poet Donald Hall made an observation that both forensic competitors and

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[3]Beverly Whitaker, "Cognition and Audience in a Performance Class," *Speech Teacher,* 23 (January 1974), pp. 63-6.

[4]Arnold Isenberg uses the terms "verdicts," "reasons," and "norms" in his essay, "Critical Communication," *The Philosophical Review,* 58 (July 1949), pp. 330-344. For a fuller application of these terms to the interpretation classroom, see Beverly Whitaker, "Critical Reasons and Literature in Performance," *Speech Teacher,* 18 (September 1969), pp. 191-3.

academic oral interpreters can claim as support for their endeavors. In an important editorial, he says:

> When we put away childish things we tend to despise what we leave behind. Among educators it has been progressive or forward-looking to deplore learning by rote and to oppose it to thinking. Maybe this is true for mathematics. But when we stopped memorizing and reciting literature, our ability to read started its famous decline. It was the loss of recitation—not its replacements (radio, film, television)—that diminished our literacy ... As children speak poems and stories aloud, by the pitch and muscle of their voices they will discover drama, humor, passion and intelligence in print. In order to become a nation of readers, we need again to become a nation of reciters.[5]

In spite of its artificial context, the competitive oral interpretation event can teach the student about literature and performance if judges are willing and able to write concise, normative ballots. We must continue to expect close textual study and analysis from our student competitors, and we should encourage common sense about the knowledge, likes, and interests of the audience as students select literature for contest performance. For if oral interpretation is a "communicative art," students in contests should be able to communicate with any reasonably sensitive person, and not just with that rare, expert, "performer" judge.

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[5]Donald Hall, "Bring Back the Out-Loud Culture," *Newsweek,* April 15, 1985, p. 12.

"The Interpretation Division and Contest Rules and Judging: The Task Force Report Revisited": Jerry W. Mathis

Prior to the preconvention conference sponsored by the SCA Interpretation Division in 1983, a task force was established to consider the matter of contest rules and judging from the perspective of the Interpretation Division. This project was motivated by a perception that there was a difference between what was identified as interpretation in the contest setting and what was similarly labeled in ID convention programs in *Literature in Performance* (the ID Journal), and at festivals. Further motivation was a concern about the effect of that difference, if it exists, upon the health and welfare of the interpretation field. The Task Force was composed of those who had had experience in interpretation in its various settings and manifestations.

The consensus of those who considered these issues was that contests did, indeed, not reflect the discipline as otherwise academically constituted. It was felt that contest rules and judging showed limited evidence of current performance theory and that, with respect to this theory, the resulting contest performances too often unsatisfactorily brought text and performer together. Furthermore, because forensic practitioners were infrequently at festivals or ID convention programs, and because ID members were increasingly divorcing themselves from contest participation, the interpretation practices at contests and those evidenced through the field of Performance Studies did in fact constitute separate fields to a significant degree.

Since many in the communication and theatre fields know interpretation through its contest manifestations, and since both versions operate under the same label, there was a concern among Task Force members about misunderstanding of the field of Performance Studies, misunderstanding that may be adversely affecting the academic support for the area within the communication and theatre disciplines.

In light of the conclusion drawn by the Task Force, it is worthwhile to examine in more detail some of the differences between the two versions of that which goes by one name.

Gauged by its rules and by judges' comments, the contest version of interpretation calls for a mode of performing which demands a difference, largely indefinable, between "interpretation" and "acting." Contest interpretation is constituted of negative limitations and positive proscriptions: this performance mode does not allow costumes, props, on-stage focus, movement, characterization, etc., and it demands the presence of script, off-stage focus, an emphasis on literary "theme," and a rhetorical framework for the performed program.

On the other hand, the field of Performance Studies is informed by aesthetic theories that apply as well to the actor in traditional dramatic productions as to solo or group performers of poetry, fiction, drama, etc. As Wallace Bacon points out in *Literature in Performance,* "What goes on in the solo event is a matching of the poem and performer. The poem as text remains unchanged; the performer remains the performer we recognize. The body *act* for the two becomes one, becomes visible and audible, becomes *flesh.*"[1] This view of performance as art resists rules, holding that each text to be performed sets up its individual demands for performance elements, and that performers are free to draw on or violate the

[1]Wallace A. Bacon, "An Aesthetics of Performance," *Literature in Performance,* 1 (November 1980), p. 1.

complete range of performance techniques and conventions in their efforts to achieve unity of form and experience with the text. Bacon points out in the introduction of his own textbook in the field. "We shall be wary of rules, though not of suggestions. It is better to say 'Let's see whether' than to say 'You must never.' We are not so much interested in confining as in defining possibilities."[2] And he further explains in his article in the debut issue of *Literature in Performance:*

> In the past, there have been heated arguments over such questions as whether or not to use manuscripts, lecterns, or props in interpretation; whether or not an interpreter may move; whether or not the interpreter should use an introduction. Many of the arguments began at the wrong end, with a definition which confined, hampered, emasculated the poem itself... It is probably better to feel free to try what the poem asks, whether or not that act fits within definitions of interpretation, than to deny the trial, although, as we all know, trials may produce errors, and one must come to know when any particular trial must end.[3]

Certainly, there is little evidence of rules—either for or against—in what is seen at ID convention programs or at festivals around the country.

The identity of this field is determined not by a particular mode of performance, but by the unique endeavors in inquiry afforded to those who approach either the various concerns of communication through performed literature or the varied projects of theatre through applying theories of text and performance. This field of performance studies can make unique contributions to the various disciplines it touches—communication, theatre, literary study— contributions that distinguish the Performance Studies area from forensic interpretation and depart from the rules and judging practices operating in contests. For example investigations in the phenomenology of performance lead the investigator to under- standings of acts of embodied consciousness, acts which the rules— since they proscribe against gestures and movement—would deprive of body. Studies in semiotics and the phenomenology of language lead to an awareness of represented acts whose actions would be forbidden by rules (which forbid "acting") and whose contexts of space and time could not be explored in restricted performance modes. Relations of verbal and nonverbal discourse set up in literary works of art would lead to performances that would be disqualified by judges adhering to current contest practice. Those who would heed the call of deconstruction to approach

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[2]Wallace A. Bacon, *The Art of Interpretation,* 3rd ed. (Chicago: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979), p. xii.
[3]Bacon, "An Aesthetics of Performance," p. 5.

literary texts free of predetermined sets of expectations and strategies would operate about as far from forensic regulations as one could possibly get. Indeed, the fundamental project of the performer of prose fiction—that of tracing the shifting perspective of narration, often into and out of the point of view of multiple characters and narrators, thereby necessitating extensive characterization and embodying of these various perspectives—is something that seems totally overlooked in the guidance for judging that current rules establish.

Since the matters of concern in the two brands of interpretation seem currently so divergent, one is led to ask what the prospects for future reconciliation might be. For forensic interpretation to change its structures of contest rules and judging to coincide with the Performance Studies view would necessitate a freeing of restrictions and the dissemination of a different perspective upon the activity among the practitioners at contests. Is it realistic to think such a change would come about? Is any plan to accomplish this change either practicable or even desirable? For those who view "interpretation" from the alternate perspective, to hold to current contest rules and practices would necessitate the cancelling of decades of evolvement in the field. Surely such a move is impossible for these academics.

It may be that the two areas will further dissociate. (This dissociation was, in fact, a possibility identified in the discussion of the Task Force report at the 1983 preconvention conference.) There is not extensive evidence of change in the rules in recent tournament invitations. (On the other hand, new guidelines for judging at the Bradley University tournament in 1984 did include the statements that "The interpreter's program should be delivered using appropriate vocal and physical presentational skills which enhance rather than detract from the literature." Furthermore, at the fall 1984 convention of the Illinois Speech and Theatre Association, coaches and students from Bradley presented a program which explored forensic performance freed of rules.)

Perhaps the most significant evidence of a continuing divergence of the two areas is the increasing movement to change the names of interpretation departments, abandoning the term *interpretation.* Northwestern University's department has now become the Department of Performance Studies, and other institutions are either using or moving toward the adoption of the "Performance Studies" designation for their programs. These designations reflect both the title and the terminology used extensively in the ID journal, *Literature in Performance.* One is prompted to ask whether the term interpretation, as rigidly maintained in contest rules and

practices, might be destined for a fate similar to the earlier *elocution* and *declamation.* Even now, can anywhere outside of the contest setting be found where this brand of performance is practiced?

Finally, if it is true that a continued separating of the fields will come about, one is moved to speculate whether each or either of the fields will be enriched by the split and to wonder what might be lost in the course of making gains in such a direction.

"Topical Concerns in the Poetry Coaching Dyad": Carolyn Keefe

Criticism of Forensic Oral Interpretation

Oral interpretation specialists, particularly those outside the forensic community, seem to believe that forensic oral interpretation is beset with serious problems.[1] Task Force III of the Pre-SCA 1983 Convention Conference on "Interpretation: Issues for the '80s" identified these problems as: 1) the failure of contests to bring together satisfactorily the text and the performer, 2) the inadequacy of contest rules to reflect contemporary interpretation theory, 3) forensic instructors' lack of interpretation knowledge, 4) the failure of judges to consider the literature, 5) judging incompetence, 6) the inferiority of contests as compared to festivals, 7) emphasis on winning as an end in itself, and 8) the influence of forensics on the depreciation of academic respect for oral interpretation.[2]

The only evidence to support these charges is the personal opinion of the task force members and a few recollected quotations from forensic coaches. In the task force worksheet exchange, the innuendos against forensics and its practitioners were frequent. One participant, in commenting on delivery techniques, claims, "It [the perceived focus on delivery] smacks dangerously to me of the old mechanical school of elocution. It's simply dressed up in modern language."[3] Another person calls forensics a "wasteland."[4]

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[1]For a look at what some forensic educators perceive as problems, see Hal H. Holloway, et al., "Report on the Action Caucus on Oral Interpretation in Forensic Competition," *National Forensic Journal* 1 (Spring 1983); pp. 43-58.

[2]Jerry Mathis, chairperson, Worksheet of Task Force III of the Pre-SCA 1983 Convention Conference on "Interpretation: Issues for the '80s," Sauk Valley College, Dixon, Illinois.

[3]Mathis, p. 5.

[4]Mathis, p. 13.

Merely pointing out that the person who attacks the status quo has a responsibility to present a well-supported case is weak refutation against the detractors of forensics. But currently the forensic community has no strong argumentative recourse and must fall back on such an injunction and in trading opinion for opinion, example for example. Forensic oral interpretation lacks the descriptive research that could ascertain its status and the empirical research that could determine its effects. Without these studies, forensic educators do not know if defense of the status quo, minor repairs, or rigorous reform should be the response to criticism.

If the forensic community follows its teaching that contentions should be supported by sufficient, recent, varied, and trustworthy evidence, then it will realize that its immediate task is to develop hypotheses and conduct useful research on its own activities. Every area of forensic oral interpretation has been neglected.[5] Thus, many starting points are needed in order to build theory and establish connections between the various components of interpretation.

A Study of Forensic Coaching

Procedure. In a recent study,[6] this author focused upon the coaching of oral interpretation of poetry. Eight coaches from across the country[7] (four senior coaches and four graduate student coaches[8]), who were associated with "consistent" forensic programs,[9] tape recorded their coaching sessions that brought eight

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[5]This statement is based upon a review from 1950 on of all the national and regional speech communication journals, those of Pi Kappa Delta, Delta Sigma Rho-Tau Kappa Alpha, and the American Forensic Association, the new journal *Literature in Performance,* as well as computer searches of ERIC and the dissertation data base.

[6]Carolyn Keefe, "The Process of Coaching for Intercollegiate Forensic Competition in Oral Interpretation of Poetry" (Ed.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1983).

[7]One coach came from Oregon but coached in Pennsylvania, one from California, two from Missouri, one from Florida, and three from Pennsylvania, one of whom coached in New York.

[8]A senior coach was defined as a person who has had at least five years postcollege experience as a forensic coach and is a member of the faculty at a college or university or has been hired as an adjunct to direct the forensic program at a college or university. A graduate student coach was defined as an individual who has had less than five years postcollege experience as a forensic coach and is enrolled in a graduate program.

[9]A consistent program was defined as one that appears for at least the previous five years among the winners in *Intercollegiate Speech Tournament Results.*

novices[10] to tournament-readiness.[11] All the students used the same three-poem poetry program on the general theme of animals and children, but each student was required to write the introduction and transitions. After tapescripts had been prepared, the researcher analyzed the verbal interactions, identified the oral interpretation topics covered[12] in each session, and specified patterns in using types of verbal interactions and in presenting the topics.

It is only with the matter of oral interpretation topics that the author is concerned in this paper. If it can be shown that the eight coaching dyads dealt with the topics widely recognized as important in analyzing literature and preparing for delivery, then the charges that forensics does not bring together satisfactorily the text and the performer and that forensic instructors lack interpretation knowledge will be proven false for at least the persons involved in this study.

Finding out the topical content of the coaching sessions took several steps. On the basis that multiple edition oral interpretation textbook authors could be rightly considered experts in the field, the researcher first made an inductive study of three textbooks: Bacon's *The Art of Interpretation,* Bowen, Aggertt, and Rickert's *Communicative Reading,* and Lee and Gura's *Oral Interpretation.*[13] The purpose was to identify the topics that these authors treat in reference to poetry. Inasmuch as coaches also need to discuss with novices the various aspects of tournament competition, the researcher also included forensic topics drawn from her eighteen-year experience in coaching and from two forensic textbooks.[14] The sixty-eight topics that emerged were then grouped into five foci: 1) Focus on Literary Analysis, 2) Focus on Delivery, 3) Focus on

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[10]An undergraduate student in his or her first year of intercollegiate forensic competition was considered as a novice.

[11]Each coach was instructed to work with his or her novice until that student, in the opinion of the coach, was prepared to enter competition with the particular program. The students, however, were not required to use the material, although at least one student did perform it.

[12]The term *covered* has a flexible meaning in the study. In some cases a topic is dealt with at considerable length, yet in other instances only mention is made. Neither the length nor the frequency of treatment was studied.

[13]Wallace A. Bacon, *The Art of Interpretation,* 3rd ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979); Elbert R. Bowen, Otis J. Aggertt, and William E. Rickers, *Communicative Reading,* 4th ed. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1978); and Charlotte I. Lee and Timothy Gura, *Oral Interpretation,* 6th ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1982).

[14]Don F. Faules, Richard D. Rieke, and Jack Rhodes, *Directing Forensics,* 2nd ed. (Denver: Morton Publishing Company, 1978) and Donald W. Klopf, *Coaching & Directing Forensics* (Skokie, Illinois: National Textbook Company, 1982).

Audience, 4) Focus on Manuscript, and 5) Focus on Forensics. Next the tapescripts were examined to determine which of these topics were covered by each dyad. In order to ascertain if there was a pattern to this coverage, note was made of the particular session(s) in which the topic occurred. The last step was to categorize the topics according to the number of coaching sessions—the coaches held a total of thirty-five—in which a given topic appeared. With a range of coverage running from one session to twenty-seven, these designations were made: primary topics, nineteen to twenty-seven sessions; secondary topics, ten to eighteen sessions; and tertiary topics, one to nine sessions.

Results of the Study

Because of time limitations, the researcher is not able to discuss the patterns of coverage but will concentrate on the topics themselves. They will be presented under omitted, covered, and stressed topics.

Omitted Topics

The eight dyads touched on all but four of the sixty-eight topics. Those omitted were repetition, muscle tone/tension, audience context, and functioning of tournaments.

Covered Topics

The topics varied widely in the number of sessions in which they were found. The list below shows the primary, secondary, and tertiary classification with the topics arranged according to descending numbers of sessions.

Primary topics: mood/feeling, 27; persona, 25; time/rate/pausing, 24; theme, 22; point of view/attitude(s)/message/truth, 22; figures of speech/images/sensory appeals/visualization, 20; storyline/plot, 19; intensity/force/stress, 19; and introduction/transitions, 19.

Secondary topics: pronunciation/reader's dialect, 17; facial expression, 17; listener understanding, 15; time elements, 14; pitch/inflection, 14; allusion, 13; contrast, 13; order of selections, 13; setting/scene, 11; meaning of words, 11; characterization (vocal), 11; time limit/timing of program, 11; volume, 10; eye contact, 10; and character focus/placement, 10.

Tertiary topics: articulation, 9; audience's response/empathy/feedback, 9; binder/manuscript specifications or description, 9; breath control, 8; gesture, 8; handling of manuscript/binder, 8; attention factors, 8; marking/not marking manuscript, 8; climax, 7; quality /resonance, 7; symbolism/allegory, 6; dialect (in poem), 6;

punctuation, 6; posture, 6; movement (whole body as opposed to gesture), 6; audience's visualization of poem(s), 6; characterization (physical), 5; empathy, 5; memorization, 5; critic role; 5; choice of material, 4; forensics as learning experience, 4; biographical study of author, 3; stanzas/parts, 3; line run-ons, 3; rhythm, 3; vocal difference between introduction/transitions and poetry, 3; audience analysis, 3; type of poetry, 2; sound devices, 2; rhyme, 2; parts of speech, 2; emotion-laden words, 2; physical energy, 2; comparison, 1; difference between acting and interpretation, 1; personal appearance, 1; gender of reader, 1; cutting/editing poetry, 1; and attitude toward competition, 1.

Stressed Topics

Earlier in this paper the author explained that the sixty-eight topics were divided into five focus areas. The areas with the largest number of topics were Focus on Literary Analysis with twenty-seven and Focus on Delivery with twenty-five. Inasmuch as there is only a two-topic difference between the two areas, numerical comparisons can be made without undue concern over dispropor-tion. Examination of the coaching transcripts revealed that on the primary topic level six of the nine topics came from Focus on Literary Analysis and only two from Focus on Delivery. On the secondary topic level, however, seven of the fifteen came from Focus on Delivery and five from Focus on Literary Analysis. The two focus areas were balanced on the tertiary topic level with fifteen from each.

Discussion of Results

It is obvious that the eight coaching dyads as a whole dealt with the topics considered by oral interpretation experts as important in the study of poetry for performance. Only four of the sixty-eight topics were omitted, and plausible explanations can be made for each omission. Repetition was not a concern in the poetry selections; muscle tone/tension is a topic that is usually linked with the notion of suggestion as opposed to acting, and that concern was virtually ignored by the coaches; and audience context and the functioning of tournaments are matters most pertinent to first-time competitors, and of the eight novices only one student fell into that category.

Not only did the dyads treat most of the oral interpretation topics but they gave supremacy on the primary topic level to literary analysis. Only on the secondary topic level did delivery become a greater concern. Thus is appears that the dyads as a whole reaffirmed the prevailing notion among oral interpretation scholars that literary analysis is vital to unlocking the meaning of a

selection and that delivery grows from this study.[15]

   Although this paper examines only a portion of the data generated by the eight coaching dyads, it provides evidence that these coaches dealt with the crucial oral interpretation topics. The study casts doubt on the validity of the accusations that forensic contests are not concerned about bringing together the literature and the performer and that coaches lack knowledge of oral interpretation. Had this research shown that the coaches were deficient in these respects, however, then impetus for reform would have been provided. Either way forensic research serves a vital function for the activity that must begin to defend itself cogently and at the same time to review itself critically.

   [15]See, for example, Bacon, *The Art of Interpretation*, pp. 5-6.

"Judging Forensic Oral Interpretation: Hit or 'Miss'": John J. Allen

   Anytime one is asked to pass judgment on a public act, such as the performance of literature, he must, to be comprehensive and fair, have the time and means to ascertain the norms, standards, and intentions of the one engaged in the public act. Only by doing so can the judge justify scrupulously his/her reasoning and provide complete and defensible expression of his convictions and sentiments *in light of a particular performance.* Evaluators-judges[1] of competitive oral interpretation are not exceptions, and without reasonable knowledge of the literature and the performers' intentions they often offer only personal expressions of liking or disliking and conjecture about the reasons for the degree of success. I even question whether evaluators of forensic interpretation typically have sufficient time and wherewithal to reflect accurately and fully the entire scope of their reaction to a performance, *even if* they do know the literature and have (perhaps because of the performer's introduction) ascertained something of the performer's intentions and "where he/she is coming from."

   [1]In competitive oral interpretation evaluators uses their conclusions about a performance to act as *judge:* they assign a rank—one through six, for example—and a rating—65% through 100%. Thus evaluator-judges makes a determination of rank and rating for each performance, based on an evaluation of whatever analysis and performance options and behaviors they consider important to the particular category and the rules governing that category.

At the 1982 Action Caucus, "Oral Interpretation: Developing Common Criteria for Presentation and Judging,"[2] I advanced the premise that an evaluator must know the literature to render a fair and defensible criticism.[3] Two other premises are equally important: namely, (1) the evaluator of an art form must know thoroughly the materials of the techniques that comprise the art; and, (2) oral interpretation is a transitory art form which, in competition, makes an aesthetic experience unlikely or at least not wholly satisfactory.

Concerning the first premise—knowing the "materials" of an art form—we should consider two important principles. According to many aestheticians, we can observe a performance without knowing thoroughly the materials and techniques of that performance, but truly understanding these materials and techniques sensitizes us to the peculiar qualities of the end result.[4] D. W. Prall says:

> Without full and familiar acquaintance with the techniques of an art, it is the merest pretense that pronounces any judgment whatever on the work of that art; for such judgment is meaningless except as a record of genuine experience, and one actually does not experience any work of art unless one is sufficiently practiced in its techniques to discriminate its structural and sensuous surface as of the specific nature embodied by that technique in a given application of it.[5]

A second concern about the materials of the art form is that "critique is the *evaluation of the facts in the light of a norm.*"[6] Since we acknowledge disagreement about norms and definitions of oral interpretation,[7] it is understandable that some judges fail to substantiate adequately their evaluations and rankings/ratings because "if the norm itself is put in doubt, a critical judgment becomes impossible."[8] Even if the judge's and the performer's respective norms are clear to each and to each other, these norms may not be shared, further compounding the problem by causing points of contention.

[2]Action Caucus of the annual convention of the Speech Communication Association, Louisville, Kentucky, November 4-7.

[3]For a shortened version of these comments see Hal H. Holloway, John Allen, et al, "Instructional Practices: Report on the Action Caucus on Oral Interpretation in Forensic Competition," *The National Forensic Journal,* 1 (Spring 1983), pp.43-58.

[4]Arnold Berleant, *The Aesthetic Field* (Springfield: Charles C. Thomas, 1970), pp. 62-63.

[5]D. W. Prall, *Aesthetic Judgment,* with an introduction by Ralph Ross, (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1967), p. 210.

[6]Remy Kwant, *Critique: Its Nature and Function,* translated by Henry J. Koren (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1967), p. 18. Also see Craig R. Smith, "Actuality and Potentiality: The Essence of Criticism," *Philosophy and Rhetoric,* 3 (Summer 1970), p. 136.

[7]See, for example, Holloway et al, particularly pp. 43-49.

[8]Kwant, p. 33.

How can we evaluate and judge in good conscience if our norms cause us to adhere rigidly to but one set of rules and standards? If students violate our norms will we be capable of legitimate approval or disapproval of their efforts? For "[the] essence of [criticism] consists in the comparison of an object or act with an implicit set of norms,"[9] and "approbation arises when we observe in an object or act the exemplification of certain principles, certain rules, certain standards."[10]

Regarding the second premise—that the transitory nature of oral interpretation is frustrating because it makes having an aesthetic experience difficult—we must recognize that if oral interpretation is indeed, at least in part, an art form, we cannot have rigid predetermined goals for evaluating it.[11] Rigid norms and pre-determined goals encourage evaluations which, in part at least, are completed before the performance itself is completed. Arnold Berleant suggests that "the most important prerequisite [in judging art] is a receptivity to what actually transpires in our encounter with the arts and not to what one thinks should occur or wants to occur."[12]

The critic's job qua critic is intellectual and cognitive, while the performer's job qua performer is more nearly artistic, whether his principles label him a creative or re-creative artist, or somewhere in between. Judges participate in an event with mixed emotions: we want to be engaged totally by the performance—an aesthetic demand; we want to appreciate the skills exhibited—an aesthetic and intellectual demand; and we *need* to evaluate by rational reactions based on an understanding of the phenomenon of oral interpretation and the skills necessary to achieve excellence—an intellectual and academic demand. Though an evaluator may believe that literature-in-performance should be accepted for the direct experience it can afford, for what Berleant calls the "indis-criminate fullness of immediate experience,"[13] he is, particularly in competitive situations, called on to divide his attention between the direct experience of art and the cognitive, self-conscious process of "selection of those data that will serve as evidence for sound and rational judgment . . . [in order to] construct arguments and

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[9]Walter R. Fisher, "Rhetorical Criticism as Criticism," *Western Speech,* 38 (Spring 1974), p. 75.

[10]George Boas, *Wingless Pegasus: A Handbook for Critics* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1950), p. 119.

[11]For a discussion of the concept that a critic cannot judge art by predetermined goals, see Francis Edward Sparshott, *The Concept of Criticism* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1967), passim.

[12]Berleant, p. 96.

[13]p. 119.

perform inferences."[14]

Francis Sparschott wrote that "a critic may . . . enjoy a performance less than most of the public, not because he is less appreciative. . .but because he is more acutely aware of what he is missing."[15] A liberal interpretation of this sentiment suggests at least two things: (1) a critic often knows or at least senses that there could be more, that there might be a fuller experience to be had, and (2) a critic enjoys a performance less than others because he must "miss," i.e., forego, something of the aesthetic experience by assuming an intellectual role. In assuming an intellectual role—by being an academic observer—it is difficult to at once have an original aesthetic experience and to function in a practical sense—to have the facility to enjoy the direct, unmediated experience of art while maintaining the distance necessary to make cognitive, intellectual judgments of the success of a presentation. We ask a great deal of our sensibilities and sensitivities if we expect to experience art and evaluate art *at the same time.* Unlike a critic who can view a painting leisurely, note his initial responses and then return to the canvas to determine why he had particular responses, the evaluator of forensic interpretive performance has but one encounter with the art object.

Evaluators of forensic interpretation "miss" a lot; most important, they miss the opportunity to be truly helpful to the performers they judge. Evaluator-judges will be frustrated—and limited—until we find a way that they can evaluate particular performances as the unique experiences which they are.

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[14]p. 119. Also see M. Weitz, "Reason in Criticism," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism,* 20 (Summer 1962), p. 434.
[15]Sparschott, p. 114.

Conclusion

These four essays reflect the search for and examination of ideas which took place during the two action caucuses and symposium on oral interpretation in forensic tournaments.

As a teacher and director of forensics, Skinner saw common ground between "classroom" and "contest" interpretation. He claimed that the freedoms and restraints of the tournament environment offer opportunities for the student to cope with various, possible exigencies of a performing situation. He recognized the difficulty in finding enough qualified judges and dis-

cussed various suggestions to make the adjudicators' job easier. Skinner argued that the student in forensics should be perceived as a performer in a communicative art. His or her job is to communicate with any reasonably sensitive, intelligent person and not only the rare expert.

In contrast, Mathis saw possible divergence between oral interpretation as practiced in forensic tournaments and the theory and practice among those working in the performance of literature. Contests require proscriptions and negative limitations. This runs counter to the freedom desired to more fully realize the potentialities of literature in performance.

Keefe assumed a different position. She considered the objections of Task Force III as mainly unsubstantiated opinions and often merely innuendo. Her study of eight dyads in forensic interpretation instruction indicated that at least those eight forensic instructors seek after the basic goals so-called "academic" interpretation scholars value. Like Skinner, she could see differences due to the contest environment, but saw no basic difference in ultimate goals by at least some teachers in forensic oral interpretation.

Allen added another dimension to the exploration and dialectic. He, of course, referred to the forensic environment, but went beyond that to examine underlying tensions experienced in observing, appreciating, and adjudicating a public act such as the oral interpretation of literature. Observers or critics may not need to know the raw materials of an art, but such knowledge sensitizes them to its unique end product. There need be norms, whatever those norms should be in oral interpretation, but rigidity of norms or in following norms contradicts the nature of the interpretive art. That art is transitory making its evaluation—especially in the forensic tournament situation—difficult, and the forensic adjudicator perhaps more than another evaluator of this transitory, aesthetic experience is torn between appreciating and being part of the experience and judging it.

Allen's analysis laid bare basic problems in being part of the co-creative art of oral interpretation in that the listener is also a participant, and as a paritcipant, a forensic judge must evaluate not a particular performance or interpretation on its merit based on the interpreter and literature involved, but in relationship to another interpreter and his or her choice of prose or poetry. He hoped that ways could be found to make the forensic oral intepretation adjudicator's job easier. He thus expressed the spirit and intent of the search in three meetings, that is to seek after that which would be helpful, more conducive for better interpretation and a more humanizing experience for those involved in forensic oral interpretation contests.

Review of Professional Resources
Millard F. Eiland, Editor

ARGUMENTATION AND THE
DECISION MAKING PROCESS, 2e
by Richard D. Rieke and Malcolm O. Sillars
Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman, 1984

Any textbook which enters a second edition is a publishing and presumably an educational success, but the second edition also invites comparison with the first. This reviewer, having used both editions of Rieke and Sillars' *Argumentation and the Decision Making Process* (Wiley 1975, Scott, Foresman 1984), finds comparing the two to be a useful way of assessing the more recent version.

In their preface to the first edition, the authors described argumentation as "a unified study that examines how people give reasons for their beliefs and actions" and claimed that "our objective is to strengthen contemporary studies in argumentation and current programs in forensics." In contrast, the newer edition's preface calls argumentation the "process of *reasoning among people"* (the authors' italics) and contends that the text assists students to apply contemporary argumentation theory to practical, audience-centered contexts. There is no mention of forensics in the revised preface, the chapter on educational debate in the first edition is omitted, and debate is dealt with in one paragraph which concludes by advising the student that "if you are interested in this educational experience you should contact the Director of Forensics at your institution in order to become a part of the program" (40).

This de-emphasis on academic debate to the point of virtual exclusion probably is the biggest difference between the two editions, although one could certainly consider whether conceiving argumentation as a study of how people give reasons or one of reasoning among people constitutes a conceptual or only a semantic change. The first edition was more satisfactory as an introductory argumentation *and* debate text, whereas the newer edition continues to provide a clear and basic introduction to argumentation but requires total supplementing of debate material or the use of a distinct debate text. The second edition is better suited for an argumentation course with little or no debate.

As a fundamental argumentation text, this reviewer continues to find the book generally satisfactory. The first ten chapters, which appear in both editions in the same order and with nearly identical titles, deal with "mainstream" topics: the nature of argumentation

("theories" in the first edition); relations to decision making; analysis; the nature of arguments ("characteristics" in the first edition); evidence, values, and credibility as facets of support; case building; refutation; and language. The final chapters offer material different from that in most comparable texts, as they deal with what the authors call "specialized" types and formats for argumentation. In the first edition, these later chapters dealt with law, scholarship, and educational debate, whereas in the newer edition, the chapter on debate has been dropped and new chapters added on politics, religion, and business.

The second edition is two chapters and thirty-five pages longer than the first, and the chapters have been laid out in a clearer and more functional manner with lists of key terms, increased use of italics and heavy type to emphasize important concepts, chapter summaries, and recommended student projects; all but the last of these instructional aids represents a significant change from the earlier version.

Textually, the second edition generally is an improvement. For example, the first edition's simple formula that argumentation occurs when people make claim statements to which others grant or deny adherence has been replaced by the more precise description of argumentation as a "process of advancing, supporting, modifying, and criticizing claims so that appropriate decision makers may grant or deny adherence" (25). This expanded statement more accurately reflects the complexity of argumentation as communication or decision making, as well as implicitly recognizing such important considerations as feedback or channel modification in the process.

In both editions, the authors claim that their work is based on the best of traditional and contemporary research in relevant fields, and this claim is borne out by the citations literally to hundreds of sources; in addition, more than one-third of the citations in the second edition are to sources published after the first edition went to press. But there is also unevenness in some respects; for example, the basic argumentation model in both editions is a slightly modified version of Toulmin's from almost thirty years ago, implying that no further refinement of the model could be made in the decade between editions. Although Rieke and Sillars cannot in general be accused of being out-of-date, in some areas they seem not to have updated as much as in others. Their treatment of general argumentation is better than their handling of decision making, partly because they have not looked extensively into the large amount of research in this area that has been produced in recent years by behavioral and experimental psychologists and sociol-

ogists, although they do rely to some extent on this work in their chapter on values.

In other respects, the book is quite good; the writing is clear enough and the explanations detailed enough to make the text especially appropriate for students with no prior study or experience in the field; the examples in the second edition, many drawn from the early 1980's, are as timely and well-chosen as possible given publishing constraints. Although this writer was at first chagrined by the exclusion of educational debate from the newer edition, he continues to find the text a highly usable introduction to argumentation.

JAY A. WARD
Director of Forensics
Thiel College

ADVANCED DEBATE: READINGS IN THEORY, PRACTICE AND TEACHING
ed. by David A. Thomas
Skokie, IL: National Textbook Co., 1979

The literature relevant to the field of forensics is vast and growing. Essays abound in our journals. It is often difficult to stay current in our reading. Experienced coaches can find themselves too busy putting out fires, and answering the pressing needs of the moment, to review the dozen or so journals which treat forensics, let alone to keep up with the outpouring of papers from conventions. Experienced student participants are often in a similar situation and inexperienced and beginning students usually don't know where or how to start—let along keep up. Thus, there is a need for books such as *Advanced Debate Readings in Theory, Practice and Teaching.*

The focus of *Advanced Debate* is debate—competitive, tournament, academic debate. The book largely excludes individual events. (I say largely only because a few of the articles can be applied to certain individual events such as persuasive speaking.) Depending on the reader's perspective, this limitation can be viewed as a strength, weakness, or need for a companion volume which treats individual events. I admit to a focus which views the

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aforementioned limitation to debate as a strength. At approximately 500 pages, plus preface, introduction, etc., the size of the work threatens one of its major functions—to help the reader stay current in the field.

Advanced Debate has a second limitation. Probably because of its data of publication, 1979, it ignores many of the recent articles and papers treating debate involving propositions of value. To this extent, the volume is already in need of revision. Some of the existing essays need to be deleted and more recent ones, especially those concerning value debate, need to be added.

Despite these limitations, *Advanced Debate* is an important work. I consider it a necessary part of every working debate coach's library. In one book, the reader can find major recent publications in debate theory, important fugitive documents, such as convention papers, and specially commissioned articles. Here is a volume of readings, written by dozens of different authors, which can be of assistance to debate coaches at all levels of expertise, but especially beginning coaches with less knowledge and experience, in helping them to stay more current in the field. *Advanced Debate* can perform the same function for debaters. Indeed, I often assign beginning student debaters, who are taking a basic debate course, readings from *Advanced Debate,* for while many of the essays are advanced, others are not. Thus, the subtitle of this book is probably a more accurate description of its contents than is the main title.

Like almost all books of readings, the content and stylistic quality varies widely from essay to essay. However, on balance, the quality is high enough to warrant the acquisition of at least one personal copy and the consideration of the adoption of *Advanced Debate,* at least as a supplemental text, in a variety of debate courses.

DEAN FADELY
Visiting Professor
The University of Denver