The Forensic

of Pi Kappa Delta

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THEMED ISSUE

TO HONOR UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP

Series 90
Number 1
Winter 2005

Pi Kappa Delta National Forensic Honorary Society

National Council

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The *Forensic of Pi Kappa Delta* invites authors to submit manuscripts related to scholarship, pedagogy, research and administration in competitive and non-competitive debate. In keeping with the vision of the present administration of Pi Kappa Delta, the Editor and Editorial Board seeks articles that are especially about ways to increase diversity in forensics. The Editorial Board will consider manuscripts of this nature of top priority. Manuscripts submitted by undergraduate students and previously unpublished scholars will also receive serious consideration.

This journal reflects the values of its supporting organization, *Pi Kappa Delta,* which is committed to promoting *"the art of persuasion, beautiful and just."* The journal seeks to promote serious scholarly discussion of issues connected to making competitive debate and individual events a powerful tool for teaching students the skills necessary for becoming articulate citizens. The journal seeks essays reflecting perspectives from all current debate and individual events forms, including, but not limited to: NDT, CEDA, NEDA, NPDA, Lincoln-Douglas debate, as well as NIET, NFA, and nontraditional individual events.

Reviews of books, activities, and other educational materials will be published periodically (as submitted), and those submissions are also sought. Potential authors should contact the Editor regarding the choice of materials for review.

All works must be original and not under review by other publishers. Authors should submit 3 **print copies AND a PC-Compatible disk version** (for editing purposes). Submissions should conform to **APA guidelines** (5th Edition). Manuscripts should not exceed 25 double-spaced typed pages, exclusive of tables and references; book reviews and educational materials should be 4-5 double-spaced pages. Submitted manuscripts will not be returned. The title page should include the title, author(s), correspondence address, e-mail address, and telephone numbers. The second page should include an abstract of 75-100 words. The text of the manuscript (including its title) should begin on the next page (with no reference to author), with the remaining pages numbered consecutively. Avoid self-identification in the text of the manuscript. Notes and references should be typed and double spaced on pages following the text of the manuscript. Tables should be clearly marked regarding their placement in the manuscript.

SEND MANUSCRIPTS TO: Nina-Jo Moore, College of Fine & Applied Arts, Appalachian State University, Box 32039, Boone, NC 28608-2039, 828-262-2171. Do not fax or email submissions, although feel free to contact the Editor by those modes of communication: moorenj@appstate.edu; 828-262-2543. Authors should have editorial decision within 3 months.

THE FORENSIC OF PI KAPPA DELTA **(ISSN:0015-735X) is now published twice yearly**, Winter and Summer, by Pi Kappa Delta Fraternal Society. Subscription price is part of membership dues. For alumni and non-members the rate is $20.00 for 1 year, $40.00 for 2 years, and $60.00 for 3 years. Second class postage is paid at Ripon, WI. Postmaster and subscribers: Please send all address change requests to: PKD, 125 Watson St., P. O. Box 38, Ripon, WI 54971. ***THE FORENSIC*** is also available on 16 mm microfilm, 35 mm microfilm, or 100 mm microfilm from University Microfilms International, 300 North Zeeb Rd, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

The Forensic of Pi Kappa Delta 90 (Winter 2005): 1-2.

To Honor Undergraduate Scholarship - Pi Kappa Delta's First Annual Undergraduate Forensic Scholars' Conference: An Editor's Introduction

Few things excite me more in my professional life as an educator than to discover that my students "get it," are able to express their ideas coherently and sensibly, and that they are willing to share their "spoils" with others. When we teach classes where we ask students to develop ideas, think critically, analyze data, and then ask them to express their ideas in the form of a paper, we are asking them to share a part of themselves that few people in other professions have the pleasure of experiencing. To that end, this issue of *The FORENSIC* proudly presents the top three papers from the first Undergraduate Honors Conference for Pi Kappa Delta held in conjunction with the National Communication Association (NCA) annual convention in Chicago, IL in November 2004.

Included in this issue of the Forensic are the top three papers, including the top paper, "An Analysis of the Meaning of Individual Events Forensic Ballots Based on Judge and Competition Metaphors" by Melissa Broeckelman of Kansas State University (now a graduate student at Kansas State University); "You Did What?!?: An Expectancy Violation Approach to Normative Behavior in Collegiate Forensics" by Darren Epping and Jennifer Labrie of Hastings College (now graduate students at Kansas State University); and "Winning on a Prayer: Invoking the Supernatural in Athletic Disclaiming" by Jordan Compton of Southwest Baptist University. All of these students deserve high accolades for the effort they put into their works, but also for being the "freshmen class" of participants in this program.

It is our hope, as the National Council of Pi Kappa Delta, that you will encourage your undergraduate students to participate in this annual event. The second annual conference will be a part of the annual National Communication Association (NCA) convention in Boston, Nov. 16-20, 2005. Please send your entries to Shannon Dyer, Southwest Baptist University, Bolivar, MO 65613, sdyer@sbuniv.edu by May 20th 2005. All of us have students we know produce fine works for our classes; when you look at those term papers at the end of this semester, why not encourage the students who have superlative papers to submit them to this conference?

I invite you now to sit back and read the works of the top papers submitted to the Undergraduate Forensic Scholars' Conference and enjoy the experience that we did when we listened to these young

scholars present their works. It will be well worth your while!

Nina-Jo Moore, Editor

The Forensic of Pi Kappa Delta 90 (Winter 2005): 3-18.

TOP PAPER

An Analysis of the Meaning of Individual Events Forensic Ballots Based on Judge and Competitor Metaphors

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KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Abstract: *This study examines the meanings ascribed to forensic ballots in order to discover whether judges and competitors view ballots differently and what meanings are most often ascribed to ballots. A survey of judges and competitors showed that little difference exists in the meanings ascribed to ballots. Judges are slightly more likely to view ballots as feedback without consequences, but both groups are most likely to view ballots as motivators that help competitors improve performances.*

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to discover whether judges and competitors at intercollegiate individual events forensic tournaments ascribe similar meanings to ballots. Little research has been done to discover how competitors view ballots, whether competitors interpret ballots the way the judges intended, or if competitors use ballot comments as guidelines for revising their performances. As the first step in exploring these issues, this study will examine metaphors that competitors and judges use to describe ballots in order to answer the following research questions:

1. Do student-competitors and judges ascribe different meanings to forensic ballots?
2. What meanings do forensic judges and competitors most often ascribe to ballots?

Review of Literature

Though the majority of forensic programs are housed in their uni-

MELISSA ANN BROECKELMAN completed a BA in English Literature at Kansas State University in May 2004 and will complete an MA in Speech, Rhetoric and Communication at Kansas State University in August 2005. She would like to acknowledge Craig Brown, Robert Imbody III, Charles Griffin, William Schenck-Hamlin, and Phillip Marzluf for their assistance throughout the project.

versities' communication departments, research about one of the most important education and communication tools in forensics, the ballot, has usually been limited to the perspectives of judges and coaches. Those who study communication learn early that the most effective communication occurs when the sender and receiver of the message have shared meanings, or interpret the messages in the same way. Even though ballots are the primary form of communication between judges and competitors in individual events forensic rounds, no research was discovered that determined whether judges and competitors have shared meanings in their perceptions of forensic ballots.

Previous published research about forensic ballots has focused on content analyses of ballots or guidelines for how ballots should be written. Bartanen (1990), Cronn-Mills (1991), Cronn-Mills & Croucher (2001), Dean & Benoit (1984), G. Jensen (1997), S. Jensen (1990), Mills (1991), Olsen & Wells (1998), and Preston (1990) conducted content analyses of individual events forensic ballots to determine what types of comments were being written. From this, guidelines for ballot writing have been suggested by Cronn-Mills (1991), Hanson (1988a), G. Jensen (1998), S. Jensen (1990), Olsen (1992), Olsen and Wells (1988), Renz (1991), and Trimble (1994). Hansen (1988b) examined the traits that students assign to good judges and found that students most value a judge who "writes concrete, helpful, truthful comments in a sufficient amount that you can learn from" and who "pays attention [and] shows genuine interest in the speaker" (p. 16). Since these studies examine the content of the ballots but do not consider whether judges and competitors view ballots the same way, a gap in forensic ballot research exists.

Previous research conducted by Nancy Goulden and Charles J. G. Griffin (1995) has examined the meanings that undergraduate students and faculty members ascribe to grades, which serve a similar evaluation role in the classroom that ballots serve in forensics. They found that teachers tend to see themselves as scientists using grades to measure student achievement, while students tend to see teachers as "black-robed judges" passing judgment on their work through grades. The interesting thing about these differing perspectives is that measurements are not negotiable, but judgments are. When talking about grades, teachers and students are often frustrated because, even though they are both using the word "grade," they mean very different things. This lack of shared meaning often leads to conflict and inadequate communication about expectations and evaluations in the classroom.

An analysis of the meanings that forensic competitors and judges ascribe to ballots is necessary in order to discover whether shared meaning about ballots exists and what meanings are most commonly ascribed to ballots. Through a comparison of classroom and forensic studies, such research also has the potential to suggest solutions to address the lack of shared meaning about grades in the classroom,

which could improve communication within education and strengthen ties between forensics and pedagogy.

METHOD

A previous study about the way that students and teachers view grades, conducted by Goulden and Griffin (1995), served as an established method that was modified slightly to fit the purposes of this study. The use of an existing model served as a reliable guideline for the collection and interpretation of data and made it possible to draw comparisons between the results of the studies more easily. This also made it easier to determine whether the results of either study might have implications for the other or suggest ways to improve the degree of agreement about meanings in evaluations in either the classroom or forensic competition.

A survey was developed that asked subjects to share demographic information about their experience in forensics and to respond to the prompts, "What do ballots mean to you?" and "Ballots are like..." These prompts were deliberately vague to control for researcher impact by minimizing the suggestive influence that more specific questions or examples of responses may have elicited. The goal was to get respondents to share ideas in the form of metaphors and implied metaphors that would most accurately reflect their underlying perceptions about the meaning and function of forensic ballots in individual events competition.

After permission was obtained from the Kansas State University Internal Review Board/University Research Compliance Office, this survey was distributed to judges and competitors at three swing tournaments attended by a total of forty-three schools representing twelve states: the Hill Country Swing, hosted by University of Texas-Austin and Texas State University-San Marcos on September 19-20, 2003; the Truman State University Show Me Swing on September 27-28, 2003; and the Kool Cat Classic Swing, hosted by Kansas State University and Hastings College on October 4-5, 2003. Completed surveys were collected from 124 competitors and 29 judges.

A coding scheme was developed that included three categories and ten subcategories into which the responses could be classified. In the Goulden and Griffin (1995) study, after the results were collected, categories were allowed to develop organically based on patterns in the responses. Likewise, the responses collected in this study were examined for themes and categories that might develop organically. Many of the same types of categories and ideas emerged in the responses in this ballot study as were seen in the Goulden and Griffin grades study, so to create a coding scheme that was appropriate for this study, only slight modifications were made to the categories already created by Goulden and Griffin. (For a complete list and description of the categories and subcategories in the coding scheme, see Appendix.)

Category I includes metaphors that describe ballots as feedback

with no consequences. Ballots tell students about the quality of their performance but do not cause them to make changes. This was reflected in three ways: ballots are seen as tools that scientifically measure achievement, sort competitors, or judge the quality of the performance. For example, one judge described ballots as "snapshots of where a competitor is at a given moment."

Category II includes metaphors that describe ballots as feedback with consequences. Ballots reflect the quality of a student's performance and may also cause changes in one of four ways: by serving as gatekeepers, emotional triggers, personal decision factors, or motivators that help the students find ways to improve their performance. For example, one judge said, "Ballots are a roadmap to improvement."

Category III includes metaphors that describe ballots as symbols that have no direct relation to the performance and serve no meaningful function. For example, one competitor said, "Ballots are like cotton candy—most lack substance."

Three coders were selected to categorize the responses. Each coder was given the descriptions of the categories and subcategories for coding (See Appendix), and a brief meeting was held to explain the coding process, answer questions, and discuss how a few sample responses would be classified. The coders then went to separate rooms to complete the coding process to ensure that the coding results were reliable, and the results were later compiled.

For the responses of each subject, each coder was asked to assign one or two codes, depending on the content and the number of meanings conveyed by the responses. Though there were two prompts to which subjects had responded, some subjects conveyed the same meaning in both of their responses or conveyed multiple meanings in each response. Sometimes one response explained the meaning intended by the other response, and sometimes the responses from a single subject were different and reflected that the subject ascribed multiple distinct meanings to ballots.

Because each coder was allowed to assign one or two codes to the responses of each subject and because some of the categories overlap, it was not unusual for coders to have different numbers of codes for each response. It was quickly noted, however, that in most cases, there was a single code that was clearly agreed upon by all coders as the primary meaning ascribed to the ballot, with a bit of differentiation in whether a secondary meaning was ascribed as well. To determine the final code(s) for each subject's response(s), any codes that had been assigned and agreed upon by two or more coders were assigned as the actual codes for the responses. For the codes that were assigned to the responses, there was an eighty-five percent intercoder reliability.

RESULTS

It is important to note that there are a greater number of responses than subjects because some subjects had more than one response. Because this study is concerned with the types of meanings attributed to ballots in this study, the responses are considered within the context of the total number of responses. Tables 1 and 2 show the frequency and percent of responses by category and subcategory for judges and competitors.

Table 1. Frequency of Responses by Category

	Competitors		Judges	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
I	19	14.18	12	32.43
II	104	77.61	23	62.16
III	11	8.21	2	5.41
Total	134	100	37	100

Table 2. Frequency of Responses by Subcategory

	Competitors		Judges	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1A	8	5.97	2	5.41
1B	9	6.72	4	10.81
1C	2	1.49	6	16.22
2A	1	0.75	0	0.00
2B	11	8.21	2	5.41
2C	0	0.00	1	2.70
2D	92	68.66	20	54.05
3A	10	7.46	2	5.41
3B	1	0.75	0	0.00
Total	134		37	

Figures 1 and 2 show the percent of responses in each category for competitors and judges.

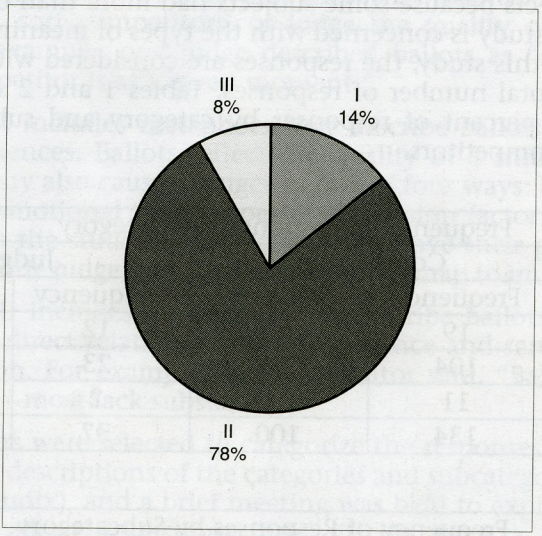

Figure 1. Percent of responses for competitors by category

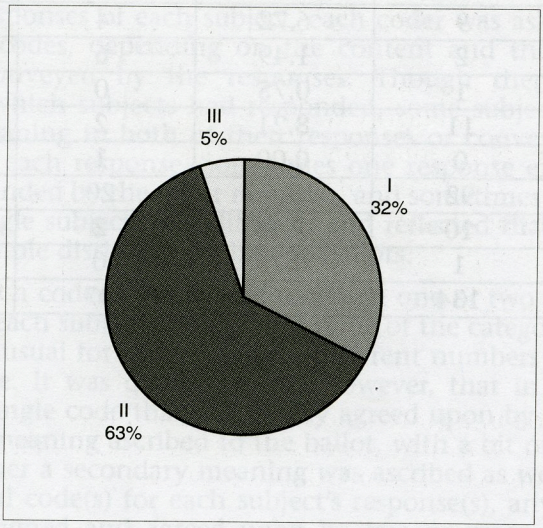

Figure 2. Percent of responses for judges by category

A Z Test for the Difference Between Proportions with a 95% confidence interval showed that the only category for which there is any

statistically significant difference in the proportion of responses from judges and competitors is Category I: Feedback Without Consequences. For Categories II and III, no statistically significant difference was found. Table 3 shows the statistics test scores for each category.

Table 3. Statistics Test Scores			
	P*	S_{P1-P2}	Z
I	0.1813	0.0715	-2.552
II	0.7427	0.0812	1.9027
III	0.0760	0.0492	0.5691

The majority of the responses for both judges and competitors fit into Subcategory IID. As Table 1 shows, 68.66% of competitors' total responses and 54.05% of judges' total responses reflected that the subjects view ballots as motivators. As Table 4 shows, though, if compared only to other responses within Category II, the most popular category, it is interesting to note that 88.46% of competitors' responses and 86.96% of judges' responses reflected that subjects view ballots specifically as motivators.

Table 4. Proportion of Responses in Category II Seen as Motivators, Category IID		
	Competitors	Judges
Number of responses in Category II	104	23
Number of responses in Subcategory IID	92	20
Percent of responses in Category II that are in Subcategory IID	88.46%	86.96%

DISCUSSION

Based on the implementation and results of this study, the following section will draw conclusions about the results, make recommendations, and discuss the limitations of the study.

Conclusions

Based on the results of this study, this researcher could then examine the importance of and reasons for the high degree of shared meaning about ballots and consider the significance of and reasons such a high proportion of judges and competitors view ballots as motivators.

Importance of Shared Meaning

Initially, one must consider why it is important to have shared meaning about evaluations, whether it is about forensic ballots or classroom grades. There are two components to this: the ego-involvement of both parties and the degree to which both parties share expectations of what the final work product is supposed to look like.

Ego-involvement

Goulden and Griffin (1995) note that conflict about grades may "be accelerated by the high levels of ego involvement" (p. 110). Because both the evaluators and the evaluated have cognitive and emotional stakes in the evaluation itself, the results of the evaluation might serve as a means of validation for the work done; therefore, if the evaluator and evaluated see the purpose and criteria of the evaluation in different ways, miscommunication and conflict can easily arise.

Shared Expectations

The degree of shared meaning about evaluations reflects the degree to which the evaluator and evaluated share expectations about what final product is expected and the criteria that are supposed to be fulfilled. Oftentimes, good students are successful in the classroom because they have figured out what the teacher wants and can produce the kind of work that the teacher is looking for, not necessarily because they are intellectually smarter than other students. Classroom teachers, however, often focus the classroom discussion almost solely on the course content and do not take the time to discuss the details that separate great from mediocre work on assignments. It should not be surprising that students do not see grades the way their teachers do and are often confused about how they are being evaluated.

The results of this study show that in forensics, judges and competitors tend to view ballots the same way. The only category in which there is any statistical difference in the proportion of responses from judges and competitors is Category I: Feedback Without Consequences. This makes sense because ballots have greater competitive and educational consequences for competitors. While the number and quality of the comments and specific rank given on any specific ballot will have little later impact on the judge who is writing the ballot, the information on the ballot may have short and long term impacts for the student.

Competitively, in the short term, the rankings on ballots determine whether a competitor is allowed to advance to quarterfinal, semifinal, and final rounds and what placing they are awarded. In the long term, the rankings on ballots and subsequent tournament placing will determine whether a student will qualify to enter competition at national tournaments. Educationally, the comments written on ballots often reveal the strengths and weaknesses of a performance and offer suggestions for improvement, which teaches students about what is expected for high quality performances. When coaches and

competitors use these comments to guide revisions, the comments become a valuable teaching tool.

This is not to say, however, that judges have no vested interest in what is written on ballots. Since many judges are also coaches and educators, the success of their own competitors reflects upon their own success as a coach and might have an impact on their own continued status as a coach and the funding their university's forensic program receives. It is, therefore, in the best interest of judges who are coaches to write helpful educational ballots so that other judges will reciprocate the action by writing educational comments on ballots for their own students. Additionally, all judges have an interest in writing ballot comments that will help competitors improve their performances because the judge might evaluate the same performance at a later tournament, and will benefit by watching an improved performance that might teach and entertain them more. This might partially explain why the difference in the proportion of judge and competitor responses in Category I, while significant, is not particularly large.

Reasons for Shared Meaning

Anyone studying this topic should examine why this higher degree of shared meaning exists between forensic judges and competitors about ballots than was found to exist between teachers and students about grades in the Goulden and Griffin study. This is an area where more research should be done, but one can hypothesize that there are three important reasons: discussion with coaches, multiple assessors, and opportunity for revision and development.

Discussion with Coaches

Coaches and competitors talk together constantly about ways to use ballots as tools for improvement, the expectations of judges, and the details of both content and delivery that separate great performances from mediocre ones. Whether it is during coaching appointments, long van rides, or at dinner after a day of competition, it is not uncommon for coaches and competitors to read through the comments received on ballots at a speech tournament and try to find specific comments or trends in comments that suggest ways that the competitors can improve their performances. By discussing comments together, coaches and competitors are more likely to understand how the other perceives ballots and ballot comments and, through that mutual understanding, are more likely to learn from one another and achieve a greater degree of meaning agreement.

Multiple Assessors

Competitors receive a lot of ballots at every tournament from other judges, many of whom are coaches. At a typical two-day swing tournament with two preliminary rounds and a final round each day, it is possible for a competitor with six events to receive up to 36 ballots during a single weekend. At larger tournaments with more prelimi-

nary rounds or semifinals and quarterfinals, competitors receive even more ballots. Receiving so much feedback from such a large number of sources makes it possible for competitors to quickly receive many ideas from multiple perspectives and allows competitors to more easily see trends in comments that might point to areas where they are doing particularly well or where they might need the greatest change. Additionally, greater credibility is given to the critiques and ideas of the evaluators because the comments are reinforced through repetition and through the authority conveyed by comments from successful coaches and former competitors. While it might be easy to dismiss a ballot from one judge, it is very difficult for competitors to ignore criticisms and ideas found on multiple ballots. Receiving ballot comments from multiple assessors lends greater credibility to the ideas shared in the ballots and gives competitors a much greater understanding of the expectations of their judges and coaches, which leads to greater shared meaning.

Opportunity for Revision and Development

Finally, the nature of the long competitive season offers plenty of opportunity for competitors to constantly revise and develop their events. The competitive nature of forensics gives competitors an additional incentive to continue working on their events, learn how to more effectively use rhetorical forms, improve writing skills, master delivery and performance skills for all types of events, and more critically evaluate their own and others' performances. Most competitors will use the same topic in prepared speech events or the same literature in interpretive events throughout the season, usually from September until April, so the competitive nature of forensics pushes students to focus their efforts on improving the quality of a few events rather than producing a large quantity of speeches or literature cuttings of average quality.

Significance of High Proportion of Responses of Ballots as Motivators

When looking at the types of responses received on the surveys during this research, it is not only important to examine whether judges and competitors see ballots the same way, but also to discover how they are most likely to view ballots. The results of this study clearly indicate that judges and competitors are most likely to view ballots as motivators, since 68.66% of all competitors' responses and 54.05% of judges' responses fit into Subcategory IID. Even more notable, if these responses are looked at in the context of the total number of subjects rather than the total number of responses, 74.19% of all competitors and 68.97% of all judges specifically described ballots as motivators.

Ballots are considered motivators if they are viewed as a source of meaningful information about work or achievement and if the information on the ballot has some type of emotional impact on the student. As motivators, ballots are seen as suggestions for improvement

or change, reasons to make changes, ideas to help students learn, constructive criticism, and vehicles for growth and development. In short, if a ballot is seen as a motivator, it is seen as a teaching tool that inspires ideas for improvement.

These results show that both judges and competitors see ballots primarily as educational tools that should be used as a means of teaching competitors how to improve performances, which lends yet more evidence to the argument that forensics is educational.

Reasons Ballots are Viewed as Motivators

Because the ranking on a ballot determines whether students advance or how well a student places in a finals round, ballots are clearly of interest to both competitors and coaches. Even more importantly, the comments on ballots often offer a justification for the ranking that was given, most commonly known as a reason for decision, and suggestions for improvement. These comments provide guidelines that help students improve and adapt their performances to most effectively meet the expectations of the audience. The comments also provide valuable educational insights into the reasons why certain things work better in performances and offer an intellectual evaluation of both the content and delivery of the performance.

The responses to the survey offer greater insight into why ballots are seen as such a valuable tool. One judge said, "Ballots are a medium for critical instruction and offering insights or perspectives on the larger goals of forensic competition, especially in the particulars of the speech to which the ballot pertains." Another noted, "A ballot is the best teaching tool. It helps my students to solidify what I say. I might tell a student to change something in practice, but it does not always sink in. Sometimes it takes a ballot to help former coaching sessions sink in." Yet another judge explained, "Ballots are the way that we as judges help competitors improve the message that they are working to deliver. Ballots are also the most tangible way for a competitor to determine how/why a decision was made." These comments reflect that judges are placing an emphasis on the value of using ballots to instruct competitors.

The responses of competitors reflect the same ideas. One competitor said, "Ballots are used for constructive criticism, which aids in the growth, intellectually and emotionally, of a piece. They also serve as a means to let you know if/when you are going down the right path." Another remarked, "Ballots are an opportunity for audience feedback. Did I get my message across? What did and did not persuade the judge? How can I get better?" One competitor noted, "Ballots are the primary way for me to improve my speech. Although my coaches' advice is vital, ballots provide me with outside views I may not have otherwise considered. After you work on a speech so long, sometimes it just becomes harder to think of new and fresh ideas, and ballots provide us with a fresh and outside point of view." Yet another explained, "Ballots are an important way to see the round through the