

bate were recorded and frequencies were tallied. Individual responses were then rank-ordered according to the frequency with which each response appeared.

The analysis of the debater's motivational interpretations produce the following results. First, the three consistently most important motivational interpretations were: preparation for careers (4.06 composite mean rank), improving analytical skills (4.37 composite mean rank), and improving delivery skills (4.75 composite mean rank). The three consistently least important motivational interpretations were improving research skills (9.68 composite mean rank), being involved in the social aspects of the activity (9.34 composite mean rank), and travel (9.18 composite mean rank). The composite mean rank for each motivational interpretation is rank-ordered and presented in Table Two.

Table Two. Rank Order of Debater's Motivational Perceptions According to Composite Mean Ranks

Motivation	Composite Mean Rank
Preparation for careers	4.06
Improving analytical skills	4.37
Improving delivery skills	4.75
Improving understanding of argumentation process	5.25
Intellectual development	5.31
Competition	6.31
Improved organizational skills	6.50
Acquiring knowledge of issue	7.37
Working as part of a team	7.87
Travel	9.18

Social activity	9.34
Improving research skills	9.68

Analysis of these results suggest the following important conclusions. First, the limited range in composite mean ranks (4.06-9.68) indicates that there is considerable variance among debaters regarding their perception of the importance of any given motivational interpretation. In short, our debaters seem to have motivational interpretations which reflect their individuality. Second, however, there is cause for some joy in the debater's assessment of why they debate. The emergence of "preparation for career" as the most important interpretation coupled with the high importance assigned to "improving analytical skills" and "improving delivery skills," and the comparatively low ranks given to "travel" and "social aspects of the activity" suggest our debaters debate primarily for reasons that are academically and intellectually defensible. Third, the troublesome area of "improving research skills," the least important motivational interpretation, should cause us some concern. Apparently, our debaters do not generally view participation in CEDA debate as a way of developing this important skill. This is to say, they do not acknowledge that improving their research skills is an important reason for being involved in the activity—at least initially.

Asking the debaters to list the most important skills or abilities they have developed by participating in CEDA debate provides use-

ful insight into how well CEDA meets the debater's motivational interpretations as well as indicates the debater's perception of the overall value of their participation in CEDA debate. Sixteen different responses were listed by the debaters. According to the frequencies calculated for each response, four responses improved speaking skills (frequency of 21), improved analytical ability (frequency of 16), improved organizational skills (frequency of 13), and benefitted career goals (frequency of 11) were the most commonly mentioned. Complete results of the responses are rank-ordered according to frequency and presented in Table Three.

Table Three. Rank ordering of Debater's Assessment of Skills and Abilities Improved by Participating in CEDA Debate According to Frequency of Response.

<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Improved speaking skills	21
Improved analytical ability	16
Improved organizational skills	13
Benefitted career goals	11
Improved ability to think quickly	7
Improved self-confidence	7
Improved interpersonal skills	7
Improved research skills	6
Improved ability to analyze both sides of an issue	5
Improved knowledge of issues	5
Improved self-discipline	4
Improved intellectual capacity	4
Improved writing skills	3
Improved listening skills	2

Improved ability to ask critical questions	2
Improved ability to defend my position	1

These results suggest the following meaningful implications. First, debaters feel that participation in CEDA debate has helped them improve a number of very important skills and abilities including: speaking, organizing, analyzing, researching, writing, and listening. Certainly each of us should take comfort in the debater's assessment of the benefit of our activity. Second, in addition to the "traditional" values assumed to emerge from participation in academic debate such as those just mentioned, debaters seem to feel their participation in CEDA has facilitated important personal growth. This trend is evidenced by the presence of three particular responses: improved self-confidence, improved interpersonal skills, and improved self-discipline. This information should enable us to expand our understanding of the real potential value of CEDA as well as provide useful insights into the scope of justification for our CEDA programs. Finally, some mention must be made of the high frequency of response attained by "benefitted career goals." The case could be made, quite convincingly I believe, that this response reflects an overall, or composite evaluation of the activity by debaters. For example, the debaters preparing for a law career might have made this response based on the perception that their speaking *and* analytical

skills have been improved as a result of participating in CEDA debate. If this is the case, we should feel very encouraged about the *overall* benefit participating in CEDA debate accrues for the individual. Furthermore, this information demonstrates that participation in CEDA debate can enable students to improve skills and abilities which are interrelated according to the needs and goals of each individual debater.

Comparing the motivational perceptions for becoming involved in the activity with the assessment of skills or abilities actually enhanced by participating in CEDA debate also produces some important implications. For example, the three most important motivational perceptions, preparation for careers, improving analytical skills, and improving delivery skills (Table Two), are among the top four most frequently realized benefits of the activity (Table Three). Such a finding enables us to conclude that students can use the forum of CEDA debate to meet concerns they have identified as being important. In addition, the response "working as part of a team" is not a potent motivating factor in the debater's decision to participate (Table Two). However, once the debater does participate in CEDA, important benefits related to this interpersonal area such as improving interpersonal skills and self-confidence can be realized (Table Three). Similarly, debaters seem to develop a number of other skills and abilities from participating in

CEDA debate that have little or no force as an initial motivator. The most notable of these skills are organizing and researching. This is evidenced by comparing the relatively low ranks attained by improving organizational skills (6.50) and improving research skills (9.68) (Table Two) with the relatively high frequency—13 and 6 respectively — with which those two skills were mentioned by debaters as actually being improved by participating in CEDA debate (Table Three). Simply, while participating in CEDA debate can help debaters meet specific, individually-determined needs, it can also produce unanticipated but important benefits as well.

How are CEDA Debates Judged?

Determining how any debate is judged is a very problematic undertaking. Trying to assess how a number of debaters have been judged and using that assessment to predict how future debates will be judged is tenuous, at best, regardless of the sample size analyzed or the methodology employed. This is true primarily because every debate is a unique communicative interaction influenced by the perceptions of the interactants at that time. Nevertheless, attempting to delineate the approximate importance attached to standard judging criteria can provide useful information regarding the *probable* preferential tendencies exercised by judges during the course of a debate. Understanding what those tendencies *might be* can provide invaluable information to

debaters by making them more aware of how to adapt to the predisposition of the "typical" CEDA judge as well as enable our colleagues in other regions of the country to gather a preliminary indication of the expectations of CEDA judges in the Southeast. In addition, such information can be useful in the process of self-analysis by providing an indicator of how closely preferential tendencies of our judges conform to the philosophical thrust of CEDA debate.

Two procedures were used to ascertain the preferential tendencies of CEDA judges. First, judges were asked on the survey instrument to rank six standard criteria, delivery, organization, refutation and reasoning, evidence, cross-examination, and analysis in terms of the comparative importance of each criteria in the outcome of a "typical" CEDA debate. A composite mean rank was calculated for each criteria by averaging the individual ranks assigned to that criteria by each judge. Second, a simple content analysis of the actual ballots written by the same set of judges at a nine round CEDA tournament (six preliminary rounds and three elimination rounds) was performed. The content analysis consisted of coding the categories of responses — evidence, off-case, justification, etc. — that appeared on each ballot. No distinction was made between complimentary and critical responses, the category of response was simply recorded.⁶ The frequency with which each category

of response appeared was tallied and the percentage of total responses accounted for by each category was computed.

The results of the first procedure indicate that the judges surveyed had relatively similar views about the comparative importance of each of the six criteria. Two of the criteria; analysis, and refutation and reasoning, were ranked either first or second by almost every judge while two other criteria, cross-examination and delivery, were ranked either fifth or sixth by virtually every judge. The composite mean rank attained by each criteria is rank-ordered and presented in Table Four.

Table Four. Judge's Assessment of Most Important Factors in Resolution of a CEDA Debate Reported by Composite Mean Ranks

<i>Factors</i>	<i>Composite Mean Rank</i>
Analysis	1.33
Refutation and Reasoning	1.91
Evidence	3.50
Organization	3.83
Cross-Examination	5.0
Delivery	5.41

The results of the content analysis are almost consistently uniform as the criteria rankings. Of the 121 responses coded into one of ten categories, four categories—analysis, definitional issues, criteria establishment, and refutation and reasoning—accounted for 83 of the coded responses or 69.5% of the total. The remaining six categories accounted for only 38 or 31.5% of all coded responses. The complete results of the content analysis are presented according to

category frequency and percentage in Table Five.

Table Five. Summary of Comment Categories Taken from Ballots Reported by Category Frequency and Category Percentage

Category	Frequency	%
1. Analysis (argument selection, relevance, clarity, contradictions and development)	36	29.7
2. Definitions (overuse, underuse, clarity, resolution)	19	15.7
3. Criteria Establishment (clarity, application)	16	13.2
4. Refutation and Reasoning (dropped arguments, argument extension, rebuttal skills)	12	9.9
5. Evidence (quality, quantity, explanation, application)	8	6.6
6. Theory Issues (explanation, application, resolution)	7	5.7
7. Justification (justifying value hierarchies, justifying the resolution as a whole)	6	5.0
8. Off-Case (explanation, application, importance)	6	5.0
9. Organization (clarity)	6	5.0
10. Delivery (clarity, persuasiveness)	5	4.2

The results of the two procedures described here suggest the following implications. First, the judges composing the survey sample appeared to write ballots roughly in accordance with the

criteria ranks they gave. Analysis, the most important criteria (Table Four) was also the most frequently coded category on the ballot analysis (Table Five). Similarly refutation and reasoning, the second most important criteria (Table Four) was among the top four categories coded in the ballot analysis (Table Five). In addition, delivery, the least important criteria (Table Four), was the least frequently coded category response (Table Five) while cross-examination, the fifth most important criteria (Table Four), did not emerge in the content analysis. Indeed, there is comfort in knowing that our judges actually wrote ballots based on the standards they articulated.

Second, the particularly high frequency with which the categories of definitions and criteria establishment appeared suggests that, as coaches, we may need to make doubly certain our debaters have a workable understanding of how to argue both of these issues. If judges make frequent comments about these issues we can infer they have some potential importance in the ultimate resolution of the round. Similarly, the relatively low frequencies attained by the coded categories of theory issues, justification, and off-case suggests that they either weigh less heavily for the judge, or that they simply are not being argued in a manner conducive to establishing their importance in the round. If the latter option is correct, and certainly more study would be necessary in order to make such

a determination, it tells us that our debaters need to develop a better understanding of how to argue—to clarify, explain, and place in some meaningful context—claims dealing with theory, justification, or off-case issues.

Third, the relatively low mean rank (Table Four) and frequency (Table Five), attained by evidence suggests that this factor is not being given enough weight by CEDA judges. Again, the low frequency could be due to the debater's inability to use evidence in a meaningful way. If this is the case, coaches must assume a responsibility to better school our debaters in argument dealing with the quality, applicability, interpretation, and critical analysis of evidence. If the problem is that judges simply do not use argument surrounding evidence as a determining factor in debate rounds, then perhaps our judges should re-evaluate their preferential tendencies in order to determine how closely they parallel the CEDA philosophy of a reasonable blend of evidence-analytic-logic. In either case, the CEDA philosophy is not being incorporated when analysis is given such a disproportionately heavier weighting than evidence (Tables Four and Five). This is not to dispute the importance of analysis, rather, I am advocating that evidence be given a greater weight in practice than it now appears to be; a weight that can help restore the balanced blend for which CEDA stands. To acknowledge the importance of evidence might also

upgrade the research skills our debaters can develop by participating in CEDA debate.

How can CEDA Debate be Improved?

Determining how CEDA debate, or any activity, can be "improved" necessarily depends upon the perceptions and personal preferences of the individuals asked to make such an assessment. In that regard, then, much of what will be said in this section must be interpreted by understanding the highly individualistic nature of the data collected. Nevertheless, any complete process of self-analysis requires that personal preferences of this sort be voiced. Perhaps the primary utility of the issues I will raise rests upon the implications these issues have in establishing agendas for future discussions by panels such as this.

I attempted to elicit responses to this issue on two levels. First, debaters were asked to list the major weaknesses they perceived in their debate abilities. The data collected on this question should provide insight as to how we as coaches can improve our coaching styles and strategies in order to maximize the educational benefits of CEDA debate for our students. The responses given by the debaters were tallied according to the frequency with which they appeared. In addition, the percentage of all responses accounted for by each individual response was computed. Second, coaches were asked to list any changes in the format or practice of CEDA they would

like to see implemented. These responses were tallied according to the frequency with which each response appeared.

Results of the first procedure indicate that the debaters were in fairly consistent agreement regarding their individual weaknesses. This is evident from the fact that only five major weaknesses were mentioned among the fifty individual responses coded. Furthermore, two weaknesses — organizational skills and delivery —accounted for 66% of all responses given. The complete results of this set of data are summarized in Table Six.

Table Six. Debater's Assessment of their Major Weaknesses Reported by Frequency of Individual Response and Percentage of Total Response.

<i>Area of Weakness</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
Organizational Skills	21	42%
Delivery Skills	12	24%
Research Skills	8	16%
Analysis	5	10%
Flowing Skills	4	8%

These results indicate that improving organizational skills and developing better delivery are major concerns of our debaters. In fact, 66.0% of all responses dealt with these two concerns. (This figure is interesting in light of the information presented in Table Three. Apparently, debaters feel CEDA debate helps them improve delivery but they desire to attain even higher levels of competency.) Improving research skills (16%),

analysis (10%), and flowing skills (8%), by comparison, are less important concerns among the debaters surveyed.

In addition to providing some sort of focus of the specific needs of our debaters and, thus, helping us as coaches and judges more clearly define our objectives, these results implicitly suggest a very important potential concern regarding our debaters' understanding of the advocacy process as Table Six indicates, improving research skills and analytical ability accounted for only 26% of all responses. While this result could be interpreted to mean our debaters, for the most part, are competent researchers and capable of on-point analysis, I suspect such an interpretation would be misleading. Judges do not voice a high regard for our debater's abilities in these areas. Rather, I suspect, the surprisingly low response rate for these two important areas is indicative of a fundamental misunderstanding of evidence-analysis in the process of advocacy. Thus, it seems clear to me that we should attempt to underscore the importance of developing research skills and the ability to analyze issues with our debaters. Furthermore, we should attempt to incorporate such an emphasis within the philosophical principle of CEDA debate; evidence-logic-analysis must be utilized in an acceptable blend.

The second procedure produced the following results. Ten different responses emerged among the eighteen responses mentioned by

coaches. Three responses—standardized prep time at tournaments, limit prep time, and make no changes—recorded the highest frequency of response. Two other responses—utilize policy topics occasionally and use the same topic both semesters were mentioned by more than one coach. The complete results of this analysis are reported in Table Seven.

Table Seven. Coaches' Assessment of How to Improve CEDA

<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Standardize prep time	3
Limit prep time	3
Make no changes	3
Utilize policy topics	2
Use the same topic both semesters	2
Announce topics earlier	1
Develop parameter statements with topics	1
Penalize "squirrel" cases more severely	1
Penalize fast delivery rates	1
Standardize the number of judges in elimination rounds	1

The results suggest two meaningful conclusions. First, the issue of prep time is apparently on the minds of several of our coaches. The fact that six of the eighteen responses mentioned prep time in some way indicates the apparent importance of this issue. Although the coaches do not agree on what should be done with prep time—three said "standardize" it and three said limit it (Table Seven),—it is clear that the general areas of prep time may be deserving of some discussion and attention by

CEDA. Second, the issue of topic formulation also seems to be worthy of future discussion. This claim is supported by the fact that five of the eighteen responses mentioned the topic production process. As with the prep time issue, the judges do not consistently agree on what should be done to improve our topic production process; two said announce topics earlier, two said use policy topics occasionally, and one said include a parameters statement with the topics. Nevertheless, it seems reasonable that CEDA may want to create a forum for promoting discussion of this issue. In short, then, while these results are far from conclusive in terms of what actions should be taken to improve CEDA, they can reasonably be construed, I believe, to be an indicator of the issues this body may want to explore and discuss further.

In summary, I have attempted to discuss the status of CEDA debate in the Southeast in light of four specific questions. Although the conclusions I have drawn must be considered as preliminary indicators, they do tend to suggest that CEDA debate is a productive and valuable activity. We must continue to work to improve the overall value and performance of CEDA. Hopefully, the results of this report can generate discussion on how to best proceed with that endeavor.

ENDNOTES

¹The growth of CEDA is summarized in James E. Tomlinson, "The Philosophy and Development of CEDA," *CEDA*

Yearbook (Cross Examination Debate Association, 1983), 4.

²Twelve coaches and 32 debaters completed survey questionnaires. In addition, 48 ballots were content analyzed.

³Kenneth Anderson, "A Critical Review of Behavioral Research in Argumentation and Forensics," *Journal of the American Forensic Association*, 10 (Winter 1974), 155.

⁴The concept of "Motivational Interpretations" provides insight into an individual's perception of why he is doing what he is doing. This concept was explained in an argumentation context by Richard & Crable, *Argumentation as Communication: Reasoning with Receivers* (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E.

Merrill, 1976), 32.

⁵The legitimacy of this approach was demonstrated in Bill Hill, "Intercollegiate Debate: Why Do Students Bother?" *The Southern Speech Communication Journal*, XLVIII (Fall, 1982), 77-88.

⁶Although responses such as "definitions appear to be justified," and "definitions did not appear to be firmly established" were grouped under the same category, the thrust of this portion of the analysis was to demonstrate the *types* of issues judges chose to make comments about. The category coding process used, therefore, provides information directly bearing upon the perception of importance judges placed on various general issues.

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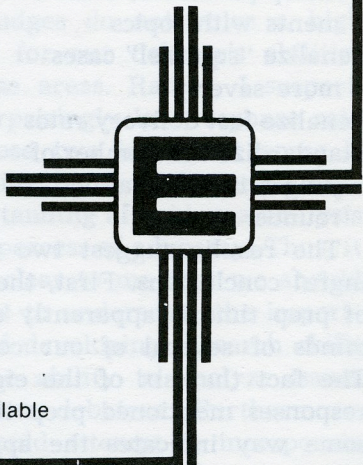
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THE FORENSIC PARTICIPATION COURSE: WHAT IS IT REALLY FOR?

By Robert S. Littlefield, Ph.D.

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When a student makes the decision to participate in forensic activities, the coach is perhaps more aware of the time commitment involved than the student. Preparation, practice, performance at tournaments, and on-campus activities will require a good share of the student's free time. As a way to compensate for this time commitment from an academic viewpoint, the participation course seems to have emerged as a vehicle for providing credits to students who do the work required of a forensic competitor.

Initially, coaches may have welcomed the participation course as an incentive for students to join the speech or debate team. However, because of varying interpretations what "being on the team" means, many coaches and teachers have begun to develop their own definitions of what "team participation involves. Unfortunately, a review of forensic literature to help teachers in the establishment of their parameters of "participation" provides little direction. Consequently, this study is designed to explore three topics: (1) What do active forensic coaches currently perceive the purpose of the participation course to be? (2) What difficulties have these coaches had in reaching their intended goals with the participation course? and (3) What should the purpose of the participation course be?

To obtain the data necessary to complete this study, a questionnaire was developed and sent to 245 schools with active forensic programs selected from the American Forensic Association's National Individual Events Tournament membership list.

Table 1

Forensic Participation Course Survey

1. Please indicate the state in which your institution is located.
2. What is the student population at your institution?
3. How many full-time staff members coach forensics at your institution?
4. Do you know, or have you had a "participation course" for students competing in forensic activities?
5. How often is the course offered?
6. On an average, how many students take the course each quarter/semester?
7. If offered for credit, how many hours may be earned each time the course is offered?
8. How is the course structured? Please indicate topics covered, types of activities, time allocated for practice, and other useful information.)
9. What difficulties do you face as an instructor with the participation course?
10. Does a syllabus accompany the